

SARDANAPALUS.

A Tragedy.



BY

LORD BYRON.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

SOLD ALSO BY

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TO
THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOETHE
A STRANGER
PRESUMES TO OFFER THE HOMAGE
OF A LITERARY VASSAL TO HIS LIEGE LORD,
THE FIRST OF EXISTING WRITERS,
WHO HAS CREATED
THE LITERATURE OF HIS OWN COUNTRY,
AND ILLUSTRATED THAT OF EUROPE.
THE UNWORTHY PRODUCTION
WHICH THE AUTHOR VENTURES TO INSCRIBE TO HIM
IS ENTITLED
SARDANAPALUS.¹

¹ [" Well knowing myself and my labours, in my old age, I could not but reflect with gratitude and diffidence on the expressions contained in this dedication, nor interpret them but as the generous tribute of a superior genius, no less original in the choice than inexhaustible in the materials of his subjects."—GOETHE.]

SARDANAPALUS:

A TRAGEDY.

[ON the original MS. Lord Byron has written :— "*Mcm. Ravenna, May 27. 1821.* — I began this drama on the 13th of January, 1821, and continued the two first acts very slowly, and by intervals. The three last acts were written since the 13th of May, 1821 (this present month); that is to say, in a fortnight." The following are extracts from Lord Byron's diary and letters. —

"January 13. 1821. Sketched the outline and Dram. Pers. of an intended tragedy of Sardanapalus, which I have for some time meditated. Took the names from Diodorus Siculus, (I know the history of Sardanapalus, and have known it since I was twelve years old,) and read over a passage in the ninth volume of Mitford's Greece, where he rather vindicates the memory of this last of the Assyrians. Carried Teresa the Italian translation of Grillparzer's Sappho. She quarrelled with me, because I said that love was *not the fittest* theme for a tragedy. I believe she was right. I must put more love into 'Sardanapalus' than I intended."

"May 25. I have completed four acts. I have made Sardanapalus brave, (though voluptuous, as history represents him,) and also as amiable as my poor powers could render him. I have strictly preserved all the unities hitherto, and mean to continue them in the fifth, if possible, but NOT for *the stage*."

"May 30. By this post I send you the tragedy. You will remark that the unities are all strictly preserved. The scene passes in the same hall always: the time, a summer's night, about nine hours or less; though it begins before sunset, and ends after sunrise. It is not for the stage, any more than the other was intended for it; and I shall take better care that they don't get hold on 't."

"July 14. I trust that 'Sardanapalus' will not be mistaken for a political play; which was so far from my intention, that I thought of nothing but Asiatic history. My object has been to dramatise, like the Greeks (a *modest* phrase), striking passages of history and mythology. You will find all this very *unlike* Shakespeare; and so much the better in one sense; for I look upon him to be the worst of models, though the most extraordinary of writers. It has been my object to be as simple and severe as Alfieri, and I have broken down the poetry as nearly as I could to common language. The hardship is that, in these times, one can neither speak of kings nor queens without suspicion of politics or personalities. I intended neither."

"July 22. Print away, and publish. I think they must own that I have more styles than one. 'Sardanapalus' is, however, almost a comic character: but, for that matter, so is Richard the Third. Mind the *unities*, which are my great object of research. I am glad Gifford likes it: as for the million, you see I have carefully consulted any thing but the taste of the day for *extravagant* 'coups de théâtre.'"

Sardanapalus was published in December, 1821, and was received with very great approbation.]

" If ' Cain ' be ' blasphemous,' Paradise Lost is blasphemous , and the very words of the Oxford gentleman, ' Evil, be thou my good,' are from that very poem, from the mouth of Satan , and is there any thing more in that of Lucifer in the Mystery ? ' Cain ' is nothing more than a drama, not a piece of argument. If Lucifer and Cain speak as the first murderer and the first rebel may be supposed to speak, surely all the rest of the personages talk also according to their characters — and the stronger passions have ever been permitted to the drama.

" I have even avoided introducing the Deity, as in Scripture (though Milton does, and not very wisely either), but have adopted his angel as sent to Cain instead, on purpose to avoid shocking any feelings on the subject, by falling short of what all uninspired men must fall short in, viz. giving an adequate notion of the effect of the presence of Jehovah. The old Mysteries introduced him liberally enough, and all this is avoided in the new one.

" The attempt to bully you, because they think it won't succeed with me, seems to me as atrocious an attempt as ever disgraced the times. What ! when Gibbon's, Hume's, Priestley's, and Drummond's publishers have been allowed to rest in peace for seventy years, are you to be singled out for a work of *fiction*, not of history or argument ? There must be something at the bottom of this — some private enemy of your own : it is otherwise incredible.

" I can only say, ' Me, me ; en adsum qui feci ; ' — that any proceedings directed against you, I beg, may be transferred to me, who am willing, and *ought*, to endure them all ; — that if you have lost money by the publication, I will refund any or all of the copyright ; — that I desire you will say that both you and Mr Gifford remonstrated against the publication, as also Mr. Hobhouse ; — that *I* alone occasioned it, and I alone am the person who, either legally or otherwise, should bear the burden. If they prosecute, I will come to England ; that is, if, by meeting it in my own person, I can save yours. Let me know. You sha'n't suffer for me, if I can help it. Make any use of this letter you please.

" Yours ever, &c

" BYRON.

" P.S. — I write to you about all this row of bad passions and absurdities with the *summer* moon (for here our winter is

clearer than your dog-days) lighting the winding Arno, with all her buildings and bridges, — so quiet and still ! — What nothings are we before the least of these stars ! ”

An individual of the name of Benbow having pirated “ Cain,” Mr. (now Sir Lancelot) Shadwell applied to the Lord Chancellor (Eldon) for an injunction to protect Mr. Murray’s property in the *Mystery*. The learned counsel, on the 9th of February, 1822, spoke as follows : —

“ This work professes to record, in a dramatic poem of three acts, the story contained in the book of Genesis. It is meant to represent the state of Cain’s mind when it received those temptations which led him to commit the murder of his brother. The actors in the poem are few : they consist of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and their two wives, with Lucifer, and, in the third act, the angel of the Lord. The book only does that which was before done by Milton, and adheres more closely to the words contained in Scripture. The book, in the commencement, represents Cain in a moody, dissipated disposition, when the Evil Spirit tempts him to go forth with him to acquire knowledge. After the first act, he leads him through the abyss of space ; and, in the third, Cain returns with a still more gloomy spirit. Although the poet puts passages into his mouth, which of themselves are blasphemous and impious ; yet it is what Milton has done also, both in his *Paradise Lost*, and *Regained*. But those passages are powerfully combated by the beautiful arguments of his wife, Adah. It is true that the book represents what Scripture represents, — that he is, notwithstanding, instigated to destroy the altar of his brother, whom he is then led on to put to death ; but then the punishment of his crime follows in the very words of the Scripture itself. Cain’s mind is immediately visited with all the horror of remorse, and he goes forth a wanderer on the face of the earth. I trust I am the last person in the world who would attempt to defend a blasphemous or impious work ; but I say that this poem is as much entitled to the protection of the court, in the abstract, as either the *Paradise Lost* or the *Paradise Regained*. So confident am I of this, that I would at present undertake to compare it with those works, passage by passage, and show that it is perfectly as moral as those productions of Milton. Every sentence carries with it, if I may use the expression, its own balsam. The authority of God is

recognised ; and Cain's impiety and crime are introduced to show that its just punishment immediately followed. I repeat, that there is no reason why this work, taken abstractedly, should not be protected as well as either of the books I have mentioned. I therefore trust that your Lordship will grant this injunction *in limine*, and then the defendants may come in and show cause against it."

The following is a note of the Lord Chancellor's judgment : —

" This court, like the other courts of justice in this country, acknowledges Christianity as part of the law of the land. The jurisdiction of this court in protecting literary property is founded on this, — that where an action will lie for pirating a work, there the court, attending to the imperfection of that remedy, grants its injunction ; because there may be publication after publication which you may never be able to hunt down by proceedings in the other courts. But where such an action does not lie, I do not apprehend that it is according to the course of the court to grant an injunction to protect the copyright. Now this publication, if it is one intended to vilify and bring into discredit that portion of Scripture history to which it relates, is a publication with reference to which, if the principles on which the case of Dr. Priestley, at Warwick, was decided, be just principles of law, the party could not recover any damages in respect of a piracy of it. This court has no criminal jurisdiction ; it cannot look on any thing as an offence ; but in those cases it only administers justice for the protection of the civil rights of those who possess them, in consequence of being able to maintain an action. You have alluded to Milton's immortal work : it did happen in the course of last long vacation, amongst the *solicite jucunda oblivia vitæ*, I read that work from beginning to end ; it is therefore quite fresh in my memory, and it appears to me that the great object of its author was to promote the cause of Christianity : there are undoubtedly a great many passages in it, of which, if that were not its object, it would be very improper by law to vindicate the publication ; but, taking it all together, it is clear that the object and effect were not to bring into disrepute, but to promote, the reverence of our religion. Now the real question is, looking at the work before me, its preface, the poem, its manner of treating the subject, particularly with reference to the fall and the atonement, whether its intent be as

innocent as that of the other with which you have compared it ; or whether it be to traduce and bring into discredit that part of sacred history This question I have no right to try, because it has been settled, after great difference of opinion among the learned, that it is for a jury to determine that point ; and where, therefore, a reasonable doubt is entertained as to the character of the work (and it is impossible for me to say I have not a doubt, I hope it is a reasonable one), another course must be taken for determining what is its true nature and character. There is a great difficulty in these cases, because it appears a strange thing to permit the multiplication of copies, by way of preventing the circulation of a mischievous work, which I do not presume to determine that this is ; but that I cannot help : and the singularity of the case, in this instance, is more obvious, because here is a defendant who has multiplied this work by piracy, and does not think proper to appear. If the work be of that character which a court of common law would consider criminal, it is pretty clear why he does not appear, because he would come *conflicens reus* ; and for the same reason the question may perhaps not be tried by an action at law ; and if it turns out to be the case, I shall be bound to give my own opinion. That opinion I express no further now than to say that, after having read the work, I cannot grant the injunction until you show me that you can maintain an action for it. If you cannot maintain an action, there is no pretence for granting an injunction ; if you should not be able to try the question at law with the defendant, I cannot be charged with impropriety if I then give my own opinion upon it. It is true that this mode of dealing with the work, if it be calculated to produce mischievous effects, opens a door for its dissemination ; but the duty of stopping the work does not belong to a court of equity, which has no criminal jurisdiction, and cannot punish or check the offence. If the character of the work is such that the publication of it amounts to a temporal offence, there is another way of proceeding, and the publication of it should be proceeded against directly as an offence ; but whether this or any other work should be so dealt with, it would be very improper for me to form or intimate an opinion — ”

[The injunction was refused accordingly. The reader is referred to Mr. Moore's Notices for abundant evidence of the pain which Lord Byron suffered from the virulence of the attacks on "Cain," and the legal procedure above alluded to.]

TO
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

THIS MYSTERY OF CAIN

IS INSCRIBED,

BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND,

AND FAITHFUL SERVANT.

THE AUTHOR.¹

¹ Sir Walter Scott announced his acceptance of this dedication in the following letter to Mr. Murray : —

" MY DEAR SIR. Edinburgh, 4th December. 1821.

"I accept, with feelings of great obligation, the flattering proposal of Lord Byron to prefix my name to the very grand and tremendous drama of 'Cain.' I may be partial to it, and you will allow I have cause; but I do not know that his Muse has ever taken so lofty a flight amid her former soarings. He has certainly matched Milton on his own ground. Some part of the language is bold, and may shock one class of readers, whose line will be adopted by others out of affection or envy. But then they must condemn the 'Paradise Lost,' if they have a mind to be consistent. The fiend-like reasoning and bold blasphemy of the fiend and of his pupil lead exactly to the point which was to be expected,—the commission of the first murder, and the ruin and despair of the perpetrator

" I do not see how any one can accuse the author himself of Manicheism. The Devil talks the language of that sect, doubtless ; because, not being able to deny the existence of the Good Principle, he endeavours to exalt himself—the Evil Principle—to a seeming equality with the Good, but such arguments, in the mouth of such a being, can only be used to deceive and to betray. Lord Byron might have made this more evident, by placing in the mouth of Adam, or of some good and protecting spirit, the reasons which render the existence of moral evil consistent with the general benevolence of the Deity. The great key to the mystery is, perhaps, the imperfection of our own faculties, which see and feel strongly the partial evils which press upon us, but know too little of the general system of the universe, to be aware how the existence of these is to be reconciled with the benevolence of the great Creator.

" To drop these speculations, you have much occasion for some mighty spirit, like Lord Byron, to come down and trouble the waters ; for, excepting ' The John Bull*,' you seem stagnating strangely in London.

" Yours, my dear Sir,

" Very truly,

" To John Murray, Esq.

WALTER SCOTT "

* [The pungent Sunday print so called had been established some little time before this letter was written, and had excited a sensation unequalled in the recent history of the newspaper press.]

PREFACE.

THE following scenes are entitled "A Mystery," in conformity with the ancient title annexed to dramas upon similar subjects, which were styled "Mysteries, or Moralities." The author has by no means taken the same liberties with his subject which were common formerly, as may be seen by any reader curious enough to refer to those very profane productions¹, whether in English, French, Italian, or Spanish. The author has endeavoured to preserve the language adapted to his characters; and where it is (and this is but rarely) taken from actual *Scripture*, he has made as little alteration, even of words, as the rhythm would permit. The reader will recollect that the book of Genesis does not state that Eve was tempted by a demon, but by "the Serpent;" and that only because he was "the most subtil of all the beasts of the field." Whatever interpretation the Rabbins and the Fathers may have put upon this, I take the words as I find them, and reply, with Bishop Watson upon similar occasions, when the Fathers were quoted to him, as Moderator in the schools of Cambridge, "Behold the Book!" — holding up the *Scripture*.² It

¹ [See Mr. Payne Collier's "Annals of the Stage," vol. i., and "Histoire du Théâtre Français, vol. ii.]

² ["I never troubled myself with answering any arguments which the opponents in the divinity-schools brought against the Articles of the Church, nor ever admitted their authority as decisive of a difficulty; but I used on such occasions to say to them, holding up the New Testament in my hand, 'En sacrum codicem.' Here is the fountain of truth; why do you follow the streams derived from it by the sophistry, or polluted by the passions, of man?" — *Bishop Watson's Life*, vol. i. p. 63.]

is to be recollected, that my present subject has nothing to do with the *New Testament*, to which no reference can be here made without anachronism. With the poems upon similar topics I have not been recently familiar. Since I was twenty I have never read Milton; but I had read him so frequently before, that this may make little difference. Gesner's "Death of Abel" I have never read since I was eight years of age, at Aberdeen. The general impression of my recollection is delight; but of the contents I remember only that Cain's wife was called Mahala, and Abel's Thirza: in the following pages I have called them "Adah" and "Zillah," the earliest female names which occur in Genesis; they were those of Lamech's wives: those of Cain and Abel are not called by their names. Whether, then, a coincidence of subject may have caused the same in expression, I know nothing, and care as little.¹

The reader will please to bear in mind (what few choose to recollect), that there is no allusion to a future state in any of the books of Moses, nor indeed in the Old Testament.² For a reason for this extraordinary

¹ [Here follows, in the original draught, — "I am prepared to be accused of Manicheism, or some other hard name ending in *ism*, which makes a formidable figure and awful sound in the eyes and ears of those who would be as much puzzled to explain the terms so banded about, as the liberal and pious indulgers in such epithets. Against such I can defend myself, or, if necessary, I can attack in turn."]

² [There are numerous passages dispersed throughout the Old Testament, which import something more than "an allusion to a future state." In truth, the Old Testament abounds in phrases which imply the immortality of the soul, and which would be insignificant and hardly intelligible, but upon that supposition. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it." — *Eccl.* xii. 7. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame: and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." — *Dan.* x. 2. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand in the latter days

omission he may consult Warburton's "Divine Legation;" whether satisfactory or not, no better has yet been assigned. I have therefore supposed it new to Cain, without, I hope, any perversion of Holy Writ.

With regard to the language of Lucifer, it was difficult for me to make him talk like a clergyman upon the same subjects; but I have done what I could to restrain him within the bounds of spiritual politeness. If he disclaims having tempted Eve in the shape of the Serpent, it is only because the book of Genesis has not the most distant allusion to any thing of the kind, but merely to the Serpent in his serpentine capacity.

Note. — The reader will perceive that the author has partly adopted in this poem the notion of Cuvier, that the world had been destroyed several times before the creation of man. This speculation, derived from the different strata and the bones of enormous and unknown animals found in them, is not contrary to the Mosaic account, but rather confirms it; as no human bones have yet been discovered in those strata, although those of many known animals are found near the remains of the unknown. The assertion of Lucifer, that the pre-Adamite world was also peopled by rational beings much more intelligent than man, and proportionably powerful to the mammoth, &c. &c., is, of course, a poetical fiction to help him to make out his case.

I ought to add, that there is a "tramelogedia" of Alfieri, called "Abele." — I have never read that, nor any other of the posthumous works of the writer, except his *Life*.

Ravenna, Sept. 20. 1821.

upon the earth: and though after my skin worms shall destroy my body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." — *Job*. xix. 25. — *BRIT. REV.*]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Men. — ADAM.
CAIN.
ABEL.

Spirits. — ANGEL OF THE LORD.
LUCIFER.

Women. — EVE.
ADAH.
ZILLAH.

CAIN:

A MYSTERY.¹

ACT I.

SCENE I

The Land without Paradise. — Time, Sunrise.

ADAM, EVE, CAIN, ABEL, ADAH, ZILLAH, *offering a Sacrifice.*

Adam. God, the Eternal ! Infinite ! All-wise ! —
Who out of darkness on the deep didst make
Light on the waters with a word — all hail !
Jehovah, with returning light, all hail !

Eve. God ! who didst name the day, and separate
Morning from night, till then divided never —
Who didst divide the wave from wave, and call
Part of thy work the firmament — all hail !

Abel. God ! who didst call the elements into
Earth — ocean — air — and fire, and with the day

¹ [Lord Byron has thought proper to call this drama a "Mystery;" the name which, as is well known, was given in our own country, before the Reformation, to those scenic representations of the mysterious events of our religion, which, indecent and unedifying as they seem to ourselves, were, perhaps, the principal means by which a knowledge of those events was conveyed to our rude and uninstructed ancestors. But, except in the topics on which it is employed, Lord Byron's *Mystery* has no resemblance to those which it claims as its prototypes — BISHOP HILBER.]

And night, and worlds which these illuminate,
Or shadow, madest beings to enjoy them,
And love both them and thee — all hail ! all hail !

Adah. God, the Eternal ! Parent of all things !
Who didst create these best and beauteous beings,
'To be beloved, more than all, save thee —
Let me love thee and them : — All hail ! all hail !

Zillah. Oh, God ! who loving, making, blessing all,
Yet didst permit the serpent to creep in,
And drive my father forth from Paradise,
Keep us from further evil : — Hail ! all hail !

Adam. Son Cain, my first-born, wherefore art thou
silent ?

Cain. Why should I speak ?

Adam. To pray.¹

Cain. Have ye not pray'd ?

Adam. We have, most fervently.

Cain. And loudly : * I

Have heard you.

Adam. So will God, I trust.

Abel. Amen !

Adam. But thou, my eldest born, art silent still.

Cain. 'T is better I should be so.

Adam. Wherefore so ?

Cain. I have nought to ask.²

¹ [" Prayer," said Lord Byron, at Cephalonia, "does not consist in the act of kneeling, nor in repeating certain words in a solemn manner. Devotion is the affection of the heart, and this I feel ; for when I view the wonders of creation, I bow to the majesty of Heaven ; and when I feel the enjoyment of life, health, and happiness, I feel grateful to God for having bestowed these upon me." — KENNEDY'S *Conversations*, p. 135]

² [" Say then, shall man, deprived all powers of choice,
Ne'er raise to Heaven the supplicating voice ?
Not so ; but to the gods his fortunes trust ;
Their thoughts are wise, their dispensations just.
What best may profit or delight they know,
And real good for fancied bliss bestow ;

Adam. Nor aught to thank for? ¹

Cain. No.

Adam. Dost thou not live?

Cain. Must I not die?

Eve. Alas!

The fruit of our forbidden tree begins

To fall. ²

Adam. And we must gather it again.

Oh, God! why didst thou plant the tree of knowledge?

Cain. And wherefore pluck'd ye not the tree of life? Ye might have then defied him.

Adam. Oh! my son,

BlaspHEME not: these are serpents' words.

Cain. Why not?

* With eyes of pity they our frailties scan;
More dear to them, than to himself, is man " — JUV.

" Though the Deity is inclined," says Owen, " by his own benignity, to bless his creatures, yet he expects the outward expressions of devotion from the rational part of them." This is certainly what Juvenal means to inculcate: hence his earnest recommendation of a due regard to the public and ceremonial part of religion — GIFFORD]

¹ [" I took out my ' Ogden on Prayer,' and read some of it. Dr. Johnson praised him. ' Abernethy,' said he, ' allows only of a physical effect of prayer upon the mind, which may be produced many ways as well as by prayer; for instance, by meditation. Ogden goes farther. In truth, we have the consent of all nations for the efficacy of prayer, whether offered up by individuals or by assemblies; and revelation has told us it will be effectual.' " — BOSWELL, vol. iv p. 66 ed. 1835]

² [This passage affords a key to the temper and frame of mind of Cain throughout the piece. He disdains the limited existence allotted to him; he has a rooted horror of death, attended with a vehement curiosity as to his nature; and he nourishes a sullen anger against his parents, to whose misconduct he ascribes his degraded state. Added to this, he has an insatiable thirst for knowledge beyond the bounds prescribed to mortality, and this part of the poem bears a strong resemblance to Manfred, whose counterpart, indeed, in the main points of character, Cain seems to be. — CAMPBELL.]

The snake spoke *truth* : it *was* the tree of knowledge ;
 It *was* the tree of life : knowledge is good,
 And life is good ; and how can both be evil ?

Eve. My boy ! thou speakest as I spoke, in sin,
 Before thy birth : let me not see renew'd
 My misery in thine. I have repented.
 Let me not see my offspring fall into
 The snares beyond the walls of Paradise,
 Which e'en in Paradise destroy'd his parents.
 Content thee with what *is*. Had we been so,
 Thou now hadst been contented. — Oh, my son !

Adam. Our orisons completed, let us hence,
 Each to his task of toil — not heavy, though
 Needful : the earth is young, and yields us kindly
 Her fruits with little labour.

Eve. Cain, my son,
 Behold thy father cheerful and resign'd,
 And do as he doth. [*Exeunt ADAM and EVE.*]

Zillah. Wilt thou not, my brother ?

Abel. Why wilt thou wear this gloom upon thy brow,
 Which can avail thee nothing, save to rouse
 The Eternal anger ?

Adah. My beloved Cain,
 Wilt thou frown even on me ?

Cain. No, Adah ! no ;
 I fain would be alone a little while.
Abel, I'm sick at heart ; but it will pass ;
 Precede me, brother — I will follow shortly.
 And you, too, sisters, tarry not behind ;
 Your gentleness must not be harshly met :
 I'll follow you anon.

Adah. If not, I will
 Return to seek you here.

Abel. The peace of God
 Be on your spirit, brother !

[*Exeunt ABEL, ZILLAH, and ADAM.*]

Cain (solus). And this is
Life! — Toil! and wherefore should I toil? — because
My father could not keep his place in Eden.
What had *I* done in this? — I was unborn :
I sought not to be born ; nor love the state
To which that birth has brought me. Why did he
Yield to the serpent and the woman ? or,
Yielding, why suffer ? What was there in this ?
The tree was planted, and why not for him ?
If not, why place him near it, where it grew,
The fairest in the centre ? They have but
One answer to all questions, “ ’T was *his* will,
And *he* is good.” How know I that ? Because
He is all-powerful, must all-good, too, follow ?
I judge but by the fruits — and they are bitter —
Which I must feed on for a fault not mine.
Whom have we here ? — A shape like to the angels,
Yet of a sterner and a sadder aspect
Of spiritual essence : why do I quake ?
Why should I fear him more than other spirits,
Whom I see daily wave their fiery swords
Before the gates round which I linger oft,
In twilight’s hour, to catch a glimpse of those
Gardens which are my just inheritance,
Ere the night closes o’er the inhibited walls
And the immortal trees which overtop
The cherubim-defended battlements ?
If I shrink not from these, the fire-arm’d angels,
Why should I quail from him who now approaches ?
Yet he seems mightier far than them, nor less
Beauteous, and yet not all as beautiful
As he hath been, and might be : sorrow seems
Half of his immortality.¹ And is it

¹ [Cain’s description of the approach of Lucifer would have shone in the “ Paradise Lost.” There is something spiritually

So? and can aught grieve save humanity?
He cometh.

*Enter LUCIFER.*¹

Lucifer. Mortal!

Cain.

Spirit, who art thou?

fine in this conception of the terror of presentiment of coming evil — JEFFREY.]

¹ [Of Lucifer, as drawn by Lord Byron we absolutely know no evil: on the contrary, the impression which we receive of him is, from his first introduction, most favourable. He is not only endued with all the beauty, the wisdom, and the unconquerable daring which Milton has assigned him, and which may reasonably be supposed to belong to a spirit of so exalted a nature, but he is represented as unhappy without a crime, and as pitying our unhappiness. Even before he appears, we are prepared (so far as the poet has had skill to prepare us) to sympathise with any spiritual being who is opposed to the government of Jehovah. The conversations, the exhibitions which ensue, are all conducive to the same conclusion, that whatever is *evil*, and that, had the Devil been the Creator, he would have made his creatures happier. Above all, his arguments and insinuations are allowed to pass uncontradicted, or are answered only by overbearing force, and punishment inflicted not on himself but on his disciple. Nor is the intention less apparent, nor the poison less subtle, because the language employed is not indecorous, and the accuser of the Almighty does not descend to ribaldry or scurrilous invective. — BISHOP HEBER.]

The Satan of Milton is no half-human devil, with enough of earth about him to typify the malignant sceptic, and enough of heaven to throw a shade of sublimity on his very malignity. The Lucifer of Byron is neither a noble-fiend, nor yet a villain-fiend — he does nothing, and he seems nothing — there is no poetry either of character or description about him — he is a poor, sneaking, talking devil — a most wretched metaphysician, without wit enough to save him even from the damnation of criticism — he speaks neither poetry nor common sense. Thomas Aquinas would have flogged him more for his bad logic than his unbelief; and St. Dunstan would have caught him by the nose ere the purblind fiend was aware. — BLACKWOOD.

The impiety chargeable on this Mystery consists mainly in this — that the purposeless and gratuitous blasphemies put into the mouths of Lucifer and Cain are left unrefuted, so that they appear introduced for their own sake, and the design of the writer seems to terminate in them. There is no attempt made to prevent their

Lucifer. Master of spirits.

Cain. And being so, canst thou
Leave them, and walk with dust?

Lucifer. I know the thoughts
Of dust, and feel for it, and with you.

Cain. How!

You know my thoughts?

Lucifer. They are the thoughts of all
Worthy of thought; — 't is your immortal part
Which speaks within you.

Cain. What immortal part?

This has not been reveal'd: the tree of life
Was withheld from us by my father's folly,
While that of knowledge, by my mother's haste,
Was pluck'd too soon; and all the fruit is death!

Lucifer. They have deceived thee; thou shalt live.

Cain. I live,

But live to die: and, living, see nothing
To make death hateful, save an innate clinging,
A loathsome, and yet all invincible
Instinct of life, which I abhor, as I
Despise myself, yet cannot overcome —
And so I live. Would I had never lived!

leaving the strongest possible impression on the reader's mind. On the contrary, the arguments, if such they can be called, levelled against the wisdom and goodness of the Creator, are put forth with the utmost ingenuity. And it has been the noble poet's endeavour to palliate as much as possible the characters of the Evil Spirit and of the first Murderer; the former of whom is made an elegant, poetical, philosophical sentimentalist, a sort of Manfred, — the latter an ignorant, proud, and self-willed boy. Lucifer, too, is represented as denying all share in the temptation of Eve, which he throws upon the serpent "in his serpentine capacity;" the author pleading, that he does so, *only* because the book of Genesis has not the most distant allusion to any thing of the kind, and that a reference to the New Testament would be an anachronism. — *Ecl. Rev.*]

Lucifer. Thou livest, and must live for ever : think
not

The earth, which is thine outward cov'ring, is
Existence — it will cease, and thou wilt be
No less than thou art now.

Cain. No less ! and why
No more ?

Lucifer. It may be thou shalt be as we.

Cain. And ye ?

Lucifer. Are everlasting.

Cain. Are ye happy ?

Lucifer. We are mighty.

Cain. Are ye happy ?

Lucifer. No : art thou ?

Cain. How should I be so ? Look on me !

Lucifer. Poor clay !

And thou pretendest to be wretched ! Thou !

Cain. I am : — and thou, with all thy might, what
art thou ?

Lucifer. One who aspired to be what made thee, and
Would not have made thee what thou art.

Cain. Ah !

Thou look'st almost a god ; and ——

Lucifer. I am none :

And having fail'd to be one, would be nought

Save what I am. He conquer'd ; let him reign !

Cain. Who ?

Lucifer. Thy sire's Maker, and the earth's.

Cain. And heaven's,

And all that in them is. So I have heard

His seraphs sing ; and so my father saith.

Lucifer. They say — what they must sing and say
on pain

Of being that which I am — and thou art —

Of spirits and of men.

Cain. And what is that ?

Lucifer. Souls who dare use their immortality —¹
Souls who dare look the Omnipotent tyrant in
His everlasting face, and tell him that
His evil is not good! If he has made,
As he saith — which I know not, nor believe —
But, if he made us — he cannot unmake:
We are immortal! — nay, he'd *have* us so,
That he may torture: — let him! He is great —
But, in his greatness, is no happier than
We in our conflict! Goodness would not make
Evil; and what else hath he made? But let him
Sit on his vast and solitary throne,
Creating worlds, to make eternity
Less burthensome to his immense existence
And unparticipated solitude;
Let him crowd orb on orb: he is alone
Indefinite, indissoluble tyrant;²
Could he but crush himself, 't were the best boon
He ever granted: but let him reign on,
And multiply himself in misery!
Spirits and Men, at least we sympathise —
And, suffering in concert, make our pangs
Innumerable, more endurable,

¹ [In this long dialogue, the tempter tells Cain (who is thus far supposed to be ignorant of the fact) that the soul is immortal, and that "souls who dare use their immortality" are condemned by God to be wretched everlastingly. This sentiment, which is the pervading *moral* (if we may call it so) of the play, is developed in the lines which follow. — HEERA — "There is nothing against the immortality of the soul in 'Cain' that I recollect. I hold no such opinions; but, in a drama, the first rebel and the first murderer must be made to talk according to their characters." — *Byron Letters*.]

² [The poet rises to the sublime in making Lucifer first inspire Cain with the knowledge of his immortality — a portion of truth which hath the efficacy of falsehood upon the victim; for Cain, feeling himself already unhappy, knowing that his being cannot be abridged, has the less scruple to desire to be as Lucifer, "mighty." The whole of this speech is truly satanic; a daring and dreadful description given by everlasting despair of the Deity. — GALT.]

By the unbounded sympathy of all
 With all ! But *He* ! so wretched in his height,
 So restless in his wretchedness, must still
 Create, and re create ! — [swum]

Cain. 'Thou speak'st to me of things which long have
 In visions through my thought : I never could
 Reconcile what I saw with what I heard.
 My father and my mother talk to me
 Of serpents, and of fruits and trees : I see
 The gates of what they call their Paradise
 Guarded by fiery sworded cherubim,
 Which shut them out, and me : I feel the weight
 Of daily toil, and constant thought : I look
 Around a world where I seem nothing, with
 Thoughts which arise within me, as if they
 Could master all things — but I thought alone
 This misery was *mine*. — My father is
 Tamed down ; my mother has forgot the mind
 Which made her thirst for knowledge at the risk
 Of an eternal curse ; my brother is
 A watching shepherd boy, who offers up
 The firstlings of the flock to him who bids
 The earth yield nothing to us without sweat ;
 My sister Zillah sings an earlier hymn
 Than the birds' matins ; and my Adah, my
 Own and beloved, she, too, understands not
 The mind which overwhelms me : never till
 Now met I aught to sympathise with me.
 'Tis well — I rather would consort with spirits.

Lucifer. And hadst thou not been fit by thine own
 soul

For such companionship, I would not now

[“ Create, and re-create — perhaps he'll make
 One day a Son unto himself — as he
 Gave you a father — and if he so doth,
 Mark me ! that Son will be a sacrifice !” — MS.]

Have stood before thee as I am : a serpent
Had been enough to charm ye, as before. ¹

Cain. Ah ! didst *thou* tempt my mother ?

Lucifer.

I tempt none,

Save with the truth : was not the tree, the tree
Of knowledge ? was not the tree of life
Still fruitful ? ² Did I bid her pluck them not ?

Did I plant things prohibited within

The reach of beings innocent, and curious

By their own innocence ? ³ I would have made ye

Gods ; and even He who thrust ye forth, so thrust ye

Because " ye should not eat the fruits of life,

" And become gods as we." Were those his words ?

Cain. They were, as I have heard from those who
heard them,

In thunder.

Lucifer. Then who was the demon ? He

Who would not let ye live, or he who would

¹ [" Have stood before thee as I am ; but chosen
The serpent's charming symbol." — MS.]

² [The tree of life was doubtless a material tree, producing material fruit, proper as such for the nourishment of the body, but was it not also set apart to be partaken of as a symbol or sacrament of that celestial principle which nourishes the soul to immortality ? — BISHOP HORNE.]

³ [The Eclectic reviewer, we believe the late Robert Hall, says, — " Innocence is *not* the cause of curiosity, but has, in every stage of society, been its victim. Curiosity has ruined greater numbers than any other passion, and as, in its incipient actings, it is the most dangerous foe of innocence, so, when it becomes a passion, it is only fed by guilt. Innocence, indeed, is gone, when desire has conceived the sin. Cain, in this drama, is made, like the Faust of Goethe, to be the victim of curiosity ; and a fine moral might have been deduced from it." — Dr. Johnson, on the contrary, says, " A generous and elevated mind is distinguished by nothing more certainly than by an eminent degree of curiosity. This passion is, perhaps, regularly heightened in proportion as the powers of the mind are elevated and enlarged. Curiosity is the thirst of the soul ; it inflames and torments us, and makes us taste every thing with joy, however otherwise insipid, by which it may be quenched."]

Have made ye live for ever in the joy
And power of knowledge?

Cain. Would they had snatch'd both
The fruits, or neither!

Lucifer. One is yours already,
The other may be still.

Cain. How so?

Lucifer. By being
Yourselves, in your resistance. Nothing can
Quench the mind, if the mind will be itself
And centre of surrounding things — 't is made
To sway.

Cain. But didst thou tempt my parents?

Lucifer. I?
Poor clay! what should I tempt them for, or how?

Cain. They say the serpent was a spirit.

Lucifer. Who
Saith that? It is not written so on high.
The proud One will not so far falsify,
'Though man's vast fears and little vanity
Would make him cast upon the spiritual nature
His own low failing. The snake *was* the snake —
No more; and yet not less than those he tempted,
In nature being earth also — *more* in wisdom,
Since he could overcome them, and foreknew
The knowledge fatal to their narrow joys.
Think'st thou I'd take the shape of things that die?

Cain. But the thing had a demon?

Lucifer. He but woke one
In those he spake to with his forked tongue.
I tell thee that the serpent was no more
'Than a mere serpent: ask the cherubim
Who guard the tempting tree. When thousand ages
Have roll'd o'er your dead ashes, and your seed's,
The seed of the then world may thus array
Their earliest fault in fable, and attribute

To me a shape I scorn, as I scorn all
That bows to him, who made things but to bend
Before his sullen, sole eternity ;
But we, who see the truth, must speak it. Thy
Fond parents listen'd to a creeping thing,
And fell. For what should spirits tempt them ? What
Was there to envy in the narrow bounds
Of Paradise, that spirits who pervade
Space — but I speak to thee of what thou know'st
not,

With all thy tree of knowledge.

Cain. But thou canst not
Speak aught of knowledge which I would not know,
And do not thirst to know, and bear a mind
To know.

Lucifer. And heart to look on ?

Cain. Be it proved.

Lucifer. Darest thou look on Death ?

Cain. He has not yet
Been seen.

Lucifer. But must be undergone.

Cain. My father
Says he is something dreadful, and my mother
Weeps when he's named ; and Abel lifts his eyes
To heaven, and Zillah casts hers to the earth,
And sighs a prayer ; and Adah looks on me,
And speaks not.

Lucifer. And thou ?

Cain. Thoughts unspeakable
Crowd in my breast to burning, when I hear
Of this almighty Death, who is, it seems,
Inevitable. Could I wrestle with him ?
I wrestled with the lion, when a boy,
In play, till he ran roaring from my gripe.

Lucifer. It has no shape ; but will absorb all things
That bear the form of earth-born being.

Cain.

Ah !

I thought it was a being : who could do
Such evil things to beings save a being ?

Lucifer. Ask the Destroyer.

Cain.

Who ?

Lucifer.

The Maker — call him

Which name thou wilt : he makes but to destroy.

Cain. I knew not that, yet thought it, since I heard
Of death : although I know not what it is,
Yet it seems horrible. I have look'd out
In the vast desolate night in search of him ;
And when I saw gigantic shadows in
The umbrage of the walls of Eden, chequer'd
By the far-flashing of the cherubs' swords,
I watch'd for what I thought his coming ;¹ for
With fear rose longing in my heart to know
What 't was which shook us all — but nothing came.
And then I turn'd my weary eyes from off
Our native and forbidden Paradise,
Up to the lights above us, in the azure,
Which are so beautiful : shall they, too, die ?

Lucifer. Perhaps — but long outlive both thine and
thee. [die —

Cain. I 'm glad of that : I would not have them
They are so lovely. What is death ? I fear,
I feel, it is a dreadful thing ; but what,
I cannot compass : 't is denounced against us,
Both them who sinn'd and not, as an ill —
What ill ?

Lucifer. To be resolved into the earth.

¹ [It may appear a very prosaic, but it is certainly a very obvious criticism on these passages, that the young family of mankind had, long ere this, been quite familiar with the *death of animals* — some of whom Abel was in the habit of offering up as sacrifices ; so that it is not quite conceivable that they should be so much at a loss to conjecture what *Death* was — JEFFREY.]

Cain. But shall I know it?

Lucifer. As I know not death,
I cannot answer.

Cain. Were I quiet earth,
That were no evil: would I ne'er had been
Aught else but dust!

Lucifer. That is a groveling wish,
Less than thy father's, for he wish'd to know.

Cain. But not to live, or wherefore pluck'd he not
The life-tree?

Lucifer. He was hinder'd.

Cain. Deadly error!
Not to snatch first that fruit. — but ere he pluck'd
The knowledge, he was ignorant of death.
Alas! I scarcely now know what it is,
And yet I fear it — fear I know not what!

Lucifer. And I, who know all things, fear nothing;
see
What is true knowledge.¹

Cain. Wilt thou teach me all?

Lucifer. Ay, upon one condition.

Cain. Name it.

Lucifer. That
Thou dost fall down and worship me — thy Lord.

Cain. Thou art not the Lord my father worships.

Lucifer. No.

¹ [Most of Lord Byron's spleen against "My Grandmother's Review, the British," may be traced to its critique on Cain, — *c. g.* "We have heard it remarked, that a great deal of premeditated mischief is couched under the plausible reasonings put into the mouths of Cain and Lucifer. This may or may not be a just conclusion: we have no right to say that Lord Byron adopts the apologies of Cain, or the dialectics of the Devil: all that can be fairly said on this subject is — that it has been a part of the poet's plan to throw as much ingenuity into the arguments, both of Cain and his Mentor, as it was competent to his Lordship to furnish; and that he has left these arguments — without refutation or answer — to produce their unrestricted influence on the reader."]

Cain. His equal?

Lucifer. No;— I have nought in common with him!
Nor would: I would be aught above — beneath —
Aught save a sharer or a servant of
His power. I dwell apart; but I am great: —
Many there are who worship me, and more
Who shall — be thou amongst the first.

Cain. I never
As yet have bow'd unto my father's God,
Although my brother Abel oft implores
That I would join with him in sacrifice: —
Why should I bow to thee?

Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er bow'd
To him?

Cain. Have I not said it? — need I say it?
Could not thy mighty knowledge teach thee that?

Lucifer. He who bows not to him has bow'd to me

Cain. But I will bend to neither.

Lucifer. Ne'er the less,
Thou art my worshipper: not worshipping
Him makes thee mine the same.

Cain. And what is that?

Lucifer. Thou 'lt know here — and hereafter.

Cain. Let me but
Be taught the mystery of my being.

Lucifer. Follow
Where I will lead thee.

Cain. But I must retire
To till the earth — for I had promised —

Lucifer. What?

Cain. To cull some first-fruits.

Lucifer. Why?

Cain. To offer up
With Abel on an altar.

Lucifer. Saidst thou not
Thou ne'er hadst bent to him who made thee?

Cain. Yes —
But Abel's earnest prayer has wrought upon me ;
The offering is more his than mine — and Adah —

Lucifer. Why dost thou hesitate ?

Cain. She is my sister,
Born on the same day, of the same womb ; and
She wrung from me, with tears, this promise ; and
Rather than see her weep, I would, methinks,
Bear all — and worship aught.

Lucifer. Then follow me !

Cain. I will.¹

Enter ADAM.

Adam. My brother, I have come for thee ;
It is our hour of rest and joy — and we
Have less without thee. Thou hast labour'd not
This morn ; but I have done thy task : the fruits
Are ripe, and glowing as the light which ripens :
Come away.

Cain. See'st thou not ?

Adam. I see an angel ;
We have seen many : will he share our hour
Of rest ? — he is welcome.

Cain. But he is not like
The angels we have seen.

Adam. Are there, then, others ?
But he is welcome, as they were : they deign'd
To be our guests — will he ?

Cain (to Lucifer). Wilt thou ?

Lucifer. I ask
Thee to be mine.

Cain. I must away with him.

Adam. And leave us ?

Cain. Ay.

¹ [The first interview of Lucifer with Cain is full of sublimity. —
JEFFREY.]

Adah. And me?

Cain. Beloved Adah!

Adah. Let me go with thee.

Lucifer. No, she must not.

Adah. Who

Art thou that steppest between heart and heart?

Cain. He is a god.

Adah. How know'st thou?

Cain. He speaks like

A god.

Adah. So did the serpent, and it lied.

Lucifer. Thou errest, Adah! — was not the tree that
Of knowledge?

Adah. Ay — to our eternal sorrow.

Lucifer. And yet that grief is knowledge — so he
lied not:

And if he did betray you, 't was with truth;

And truth in its own essence cannot be

But good.

Adah. But all we know of it has gather'd
Evil on ill. expulsion from our home,
And dread, and toil, and sweat, and heaviness;
Remorse of that which was — and hope of that
Which cometh not. Cain! walk not with this spirit.
Bear with what we have borne, and love me — I
Love thee.

Lucifer. More than thy mother, and thy sire?

Adah. I do. Is that a sin, too?

Lucifer. No, not yet;
It one day will be in your children.

Adah. What!

Must not my daughter love her brother Enoch?

Lucifer. Not as thou lovest Cain.

Adah. Oh, my God!

Shall they not love and bring forth things that love
Out of their love? have they not drawn their milk

Out of this bosom? was not he, their father,
 Born of the same sole womb, in the same hour
 With me? did we not love each other? and
 In multiplying our being multiply
 Things which will love each other as we love
 Them? — And as I love thee, my Cain! go not
 Forth with this spirit; he is not of ours.

Lucifer. The sin I speak of is not of my making,
 And cannot be a sin in you — whate'er
 It seem in those who will replace ye in
 Mortality¹

Adah. What is the sin which is not
 Sin in itself? Can circumstance make sin
 Or virtue? — if it doth, we are the slaves
 Of —

Lucifer. Higher things than ye are slaves: and
 higher
 Than them or ye would be so, did they not
 Prefer an independency of torture
 To the smooth agonies of adulation,
 In hymns and harpings, and self-seeking prayers,
 To that which is omnipotent, because
 It is omnipotent, and not from love,
 But terror and self-hope.

Adah. Omnipotence
 Must be all goodness.

Lucifer. Was it so in Eden?

Adah. Fiend! tempt me not with beauty; thou art
 fairer

Than was the serpent, and as false.

Lucifer. As true.

Ask Eve, your mother: bears she not the knowledge
 Of good and evil?

¹ [It is impossible not to be struck with the resemblance between many of these passages and others in *Manfred*.]

Adah. Oh ! my mother ! thou
 Hast pluck'd a fruit more fatal to thine offspring
 Than to thyself ; thou at the least hast pass'd
 Thy youth in Paradise, in innocent
 And happy intercourse with happy spirits ;
 But we, thy children, ignorant of Eden,
 Are girt about by demons, who assume
 The words of God, and tempt us with our own
 Dissatisfied and curious thoughts — as thou
 Wert work'd on by the snake, in thy most flush'd
 And heedless, harmless wantonness of bliss.
 I cannot answer this immortal thing
 Which stands before me ; I cannot abhor him ;
 I look upon him with a pleasing fear,
 And yet I fly not from him : in his eye
 There is a fastening attraction which
 Fixes my fluttering eyes on his ; my heart
 Beats quick ; he awes me, and yet draws me near,
 Nearer and nearer : — Cain — Cain — save me from
 him ! ¹

Cain. What dreads my Adah ? This is no ill spirit.

Adah. He is not God — nor God's : I have beheld
 The cherubs and the seraphs ; he looks not
 Like them.

Cain. But there are spirits loftier still —
 The archangels.

Lucifer. And still loftier than the archangels.

Adah. Ay — but not blessed.

Lucifer. If the blessedness
 Consists in slavery — no.

¹ [Mr. Jeffrey's eulogium of this, perhaps the most Shakspearian speech in Lord Byron's tragedies, seems cold enough. He says "Adah, the wife of Cain, enters, and shrinks from the daring and blasphemous speech which is passing between him and the Spirit. Her account of the fascination which he exercises over her is magnificent."]

Adah. I have heard it said,
The seraphs *love most* — cherubim *know most* —
And this should be a cherub — since he loves not.

Lucifer. And if the higher knowledge quenches
love,
What must *he be* you cannot love when known? ¹
Since the all-knowing cherubim love least,
The seraphs' love can be but ignorance:
That they are not compatible, the doom
Of thy fond parents, for their daring, proves.
Choose betwixt love and knowledge — since there is
No other choice: your sire hath chosen already:
His worship is but fear.

Adah. Oh, Cain! choose love.

Cain. For thee, my *Adah*, I choose not — it was
Born with me — but I love nought else.

Adah. Our parents?

Cain. Did they love us when they snatch'd from the
tree
That which hath driven us all from Paradise?

Adah. We were not born then — and if we had been,
Should we not love them and our children, Cain?

Cain. My little Enoch! and his lisping sister!
Could I but deem them happy, I would half
Forget — but it can never be forgotten
Through thrice a thousand generations! never
Shall men love the remembrance of the man
Who sow'd the seed of evil and mankind
In the same hour! They pluck'd the tree of science
And sin — and, not content with their own sorrow,
Begot *me* — *thee* — and all the few that are,
And all the unnumber'd and innumerable
Multitudes, millions, myriads, which may be,
To inherit agonies accumulated

¹ ["What can *he be* who places love in ignorance?" — MS.]

Adah. He is not so; he hath
The angels and the mortals to make happy,
And thus becomes so in diffusing joy.
What else can joy be, but the spreading joy?

Lucifer. Ask of your sire, the exile fresh from
Eden;
Or of his first-born son: ask your own heart;
It is not tranquil.

Adah. Alas! no! and you —
Are you of heaven?

Lucifer. If I am not, enquire
The cause of this all-spreading happiness
(Which you proclaim) of the all-great and good
Maker of life and living things; it is
His secret, and he keeps it. *We* must bear,
And some of us resist, and both in vain,
His seraphs say: but it is worth the trial,
Since better may not be without. there is
A wisdom in the spirit, which directs
To right, as in the dim blue air the eye
Of you, young mortals, lights at once upon
The star which watches, welcoming the morn.

Adah. It is a beautiful star; I love it for
Its beauty.

Lucifer. And why not adore?

Adah. Our father
Adores the Invisible only.

Lucifer. But the symbols
Of the invisible are the loveliest
Of what is visible; and yon bright star
Is leader of the host of heaven.

Adah. Our father
Saith that he has beheld the God himself
Who made him and our mother.

Lucifer. Hast thou seen him?

Adah. Yes — in his works.

Lucifer.

But in his being ?

Adah.

No —

Save in my father, who is God's own image ;
Or in his angels, who are like to thee —
And brighter, yet less beautiful and powerful
In seeming : as the silent sunny noon,
All light, they look upon us ; but thou seem'st
Like an ethereal night, where long white clouds
Streak the deep purple, and unnumber'd stars
Spangle the wonderful mysterious vault
With things that look as if they would be suns ;
So beautiful, unnumber'd, and endearing,
Not dazzling, and yet drawing us to them,
They fill my eyes with tears, and so dost thou.
Thou seem'st unhappy do not make us so,
And I will weep for thee.¹

Lucifer.

Alas ! those tears !

Couldst thou but know what oceans will be shed —

Adah. By me ?

Lucifer.

By all.

Adah.

What all ?

Lucifer.

The million millions —

The myriad myriads — the all-peopled earth —

The unpeopled earth — and the o'er-peopled hell,

Of which thy bosom is the germ.

¹ [In the drawing of Cain himself, there is much vigorous expression. It seems, however, as if, in the effort to give to Lucifer that "spiritual politeness" which the poet professes to have in view, he has reduced him rather below the standard of diabolic dignity, which was necessary to his dramatic interest. He has scarcely "given the devil his due." We thought Lord Byron knew better. Milton's Satan, with his faded majesty, and blasted but not obliterated glory, holds us suspended between terror and amazement, with something like awe of his spiritual essence and lost estate, but Lord Byron has introduced him to us as elegant, pensive, and beautiful, with an air of sadness and suffering that ranks him with the oppressed, and bespeaks our pity. — BARR. CRIT.]

Adah. O Cain!
This spirit curseth us.

Cain. Let him say on;
Him will I follow.

Adah. Whither?

Lucifer. To a place
Whence he shall come back to thee in an hour;
But in that hour see things of many days.

Adah. How can that be?

Lucifer. Did not your Maker make
Out of old worlds this new one in few days?
And cannot I, who aided in this work,
Show in an hour what he hath made in many,
Or hath destroy'd in few?

Cain. Lead on.

Adah. Will he,
In sooth, return within an hour?

Lucifer. He shall.
With us acts are exempt from time, and we
Can crowd eternity into an hour,
Or stretch an hour into eternity:
We breathe not by a mortal measurement —
But that's a mystery. Cain, come on with me.

Adah. Will he return?

Lucifer. Ay, woman! he alone
Of mortals from that place (the first and last
Who shall return, save ONE), shall come back to thee,
To make that silent and expectant world
As populous as this: at present there
Are few inhabitants.

Adah. Where dwellest thou?

Lucifer. Throughout all space. Where should I
dwell? Where are
Thy God or Gods — there am I: all things are
Divided with me: life and death — and time —
Eternity — and heaven and earth — and that

Which is not heaven nor earth, but peopled with
Those who once peopled or shall people both —

These are my realms ! So that I do divide

His, and possess a kingdom which is not

His. If I were not that which I have said,

Could I stand here ? His angels are within

Your vision.

Adah. So they were when the fair serpent
Spoke with our mother first.

Lucifer. Cain ! thou hast heard.

If thou dost long for knowledge, I can satiate

That thirst ; nor ask thee to partake of fruits

Which shall deprive thee of a single good

The conqueror has left thee. Follow me.

Cain. Spirit, I have said it.

[*Exeunt LUCIFER and CAIN.*]

Adah (*follows exclaiming*). Cain ! my brother !
Cain !¹

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*The Abyss of Space.*²

Cain. I tread on air, and sink not ; yet I fear
To sink.

¹ [The act concludes with the departure of Cain, under the guidance of his new monitor, to see the place of departed spirits. Their flight, in the next, across the abyss of space, and amid the unnumbered suns and systems which it comprises, is very fine. — BISHOP HEBER.]

² [In the second act, the demon carries his disciple through all the limits of space, and expounds to him, in very lofty and obscure terms, the destinies of past and future worlds. They have a great deal of exceptionable talk. — JEFFREY.]

Lucifer. Have faith in me, and thou shalt be
Borne on the air, of which I am the prince.

Cain. Can I do so without impiety? [thus

Lucifer. Believe — and sink not ! doubt — and perish!
Would run the edict of the other God,
Who names me demon to his angels ; they
Echo the sound to miserable things,
Which, knowing nought beyond their shallow senses,
Worship the word which strikes their ear, and deem
Evil or good what is proclaim'd to them
In their abasement. I will have none such :
Worship or worship not, thou shalt behold
The worlds beyond thy little world, nor be
Amerced for doubts beyond thy little life,
With torture of *my* dooming. There will come
An hour, when, toss'd upon some water-drops,¹
A man shall say to a man, " Believe in me,
And walk the waters ; " and the man shall walk
The billows and be safe. I will not say,
Believe in *me*, as a conditional creed
To save thee ; but fly with me o'er the gulf
Of space an equal flight, and I will show
What thou dar'st not deny, — the history
Of past, and present, and of future worlds.

Cain. Oh, god, or demon, or whate'er thou art,
Is yon our earth ?

Lucifer. Dost thou not recognise
The dust which form'd your father ?

Cain. Can it be ?
Yon small blue circlet, swinging in far ether,
With an inferior circlet near it still,
Which looks like that which lit our earthly night ?
Is this our Paradise ? Where are its walls,
And they who guard them ?

¹ [" An hour, when, walking on a petty lake." — MS.]

Lucifer. Point me out the site
Of Paradise.

Cain. How should I? As we move
Like sunbeams onward, it grows small and smaller,
And as it waxes little, and then less,
Gathers a halo round it, like the light
Which shone the roundest of the stars, when I
Beheld them from the skirts of Paradise :
Methinks they both, as we recede from them,
Appear to join the innumerable stars
Which are around us ; and, as we move on,
Increase their myriads.

Lucifer. And if there should be
Worlds greater than thine own, inhabited
By greater things, and they themselves far more
In number than the dust of thy dull earth,
Though multiplied to animated atoms,
All living, and all doom'd to death, and wretched,
What wouldst thou think ?

Cain. I should be proud of thought
Which knew such things.

Lucifer. But if that high thought were
Link'd to a servile mass of matter, and,
Knowing such things, aspiring to such things,
And science still beyond them, were chain'd down
To the most gross and petty paltry wants,
All foul and fulsome, and the very best
Of thine enjoyments a sweet degradation,
A most enervating and filthy cheat
To lure thee on to the renewal of
Fresh souls and bodies, all foredoom'd to be
As frail, and few so happy ¹ ———

¹ [“ It is nothing less than absurd to suppose, that Lucifer cannot well be expected to talk like an orthodox divine, and that the conversation of the first Rebel and the first Murderer was not likely to be very unexceptionable ; or to plead the authority of Milton, or

Cain.

Spirit! I

Know nought of death, save as a dreadful thing
Of which I have heard my parents speak, as of
A hideous heritage I owe to them
No less than life; a heritage not happy,
If I may judge, till now. But, spirit! if
It be as thou hast said (and I within
Feel the prophetic torture of its truth),
Here let me die: for to give birth to those
Who can but suffer many years, and die,
Methinks is merely propagating death,
And multiplying murder.

Lucifer.

Thou canst not

All die — there is what must survive.

the authors of the old mysteries, for such offensive colloquies. The fact is, that *here* the whole argument — and a very *elaborate* and specious argument it is — is directed against the goodness or the power of the Deity; and there is no answer so much as attempted to the offensive doctrines that are so strenuously inculcated. The Devil and his pupil have the field entirely to themselves, and are encountered with nothing but feeble obtestations and unreasoning horrors. Nor is this argumentative blasphemy a mere incidental deformity that arises in the course of an action directed to the common sympathies of our nature. It forms, on the contrary, the great staple of the piece, and occupies, we should think, not less than two thirds of it; so that it is really difficult to believe that it was written for any other purpose than to inculcate these doctrines, or at least to discuss the question upon which they bear. Now, we can certainly have no objection to Lord Byron writing an essay on the origin of evil, and sifting the whole of that vast and perplexing subject, with the force and the freedom that would be expected and allowed in a fair philosophical discussion, but we do not think it fair thus to argue it partially and *con amore*, in the name of Lucifer and Cain, without the responsibility or the liability to answer, that would attach to a philosophical disputant; and in a form which both doubles the danger, if the sentiments are pernicious, and almost precludes his opponents from the possibility of a reply." — JEFFREY. — "What does Jeffrey mean by *elaborate*? Why! they were written as fast as I could put pen to paper, in the midst of evolutions, and revolutions, and persecutions, and proscriptions of all who interested me in Italy" — *Byron Letters*]

Cain. The Other
Spake not of this unto my father, when
He shut him forth from Paradise, with death
Written upon his forehead. But at least
Let what is mortal of me perish, that
I may be in the rest as angels are.

Lucifer. I am angelic : wouldst thou be as I am ?

Cain. I know not what thou art : I see thy power,
And see thou show'st me things beyond my power,
Beyond all power of my born faculties,
Although inferior still to my desires
And my conceptions.

Lucifer. What are they which dwell
So humbly in their pride, as to sojourn
With worms in clay ?

Cain. And what art thou who dwellest
So haughtily in spirit, and canst range
Nature and immortality — and yet
Seem'st sorrowful ?

Lucifer. I seem that which I am ;
And therefore do I ask of thee, if thou
Wouldst be immortal ?

Cain. Thou hast said, I must be
Immortal in despite of me. I knew not
This until lately — but since it must be,
Let me, or happy or unhappy, learn
To anticipate my immortality.

Lucifer. Thou didst before I came upon thee.

Cain. How ?

Lucifer. By suffering.

Cain. And must torture be immortal ?

Lucifer. We and thy sons will try. But now,
behold !

Is it not glorious ?

Cain. Oh, thou beautiful
And unimaginable ether ! and

Ye multiplying masses of increased
And still increasing lights! what are ye? what
Is this blue wilderness of interminable
Air, where ye roll along, as I have seen
The leaves along the limpid streams of Eden?
Is your course measured for ye? Or do ye
Sweep on in your unbounded revelry
Through an ærial universe of endless
Expansion — at which my soul aches to think —
Intoxicated with eternity?
Oh God! Oh Gods! or whatsoe'er ye are!
How beautiful ye are! how beautiful
Your works, or accidents, or whatsoe'er
They may be! Let me die, as atoms die,
(If that they die) or know ye in your might
And knowledge! My thoughts are not in this hour
Unworthy what I see, though my dust is;
Spirit! let me expire, or see them nearer.

Lucifer. Art thou not nearer? look back to thine
earth!

Cain. Where is it? I see nothing save a mass
Of most innumerable lights.

Lucifer. Look there!

Cain. I cannot see it.

Lucifer. Yet it sparkles still.

Cain. That! — yonder!

Lucifer. Yea.

Cain. And wilt thou tell me so?

Why, I have seen the fire-flies and fire-worms
Sprinkle the dusky groves and the green banks
In the dim twilight, brighter than yon world
Which bears them.

Lucifer. Thou hast seen both worms and worlds,
Each bright and sparkling — what dost think of them?

Cain. That they are beautiful in their own sphere,
And that the night, which makes both beautiful,

The little shining fire-fly in its flight,
And the immortal star in its great course,
Must both be guided.

Lucifer. But by whom or what ?

Cain. Show me.

Lucifer. Dar'st thou behold ?

Cain. How know I what
I dare behold ? As yet, thou hast shown nought
I dare not gaze on further.

Lucifer. On, then, with me.
Wouldst thou behold things mortal or immortal ?

Cain. Why, what are things ?

Lucifer. Both partly : but what doth
Sit next thy heart ?

Cain. The things I see.

Lucifer. But what
Sate nearest it ?

Cain. The things I have not seen,
Nor ever shall — the mysteries of death. [died,

Lucifer. What, if I show to thee things which have
As I have shown thee much which cannot die ?

Cain. Do so.

Lucifer. Away, then ! on our mighty wings.

Cain. Oh ! how we cleave the blue ! The stars fade
from us !

The earth ! where is my earth ? Let me look on it,
For I was made of it.

Lucifer. 'Tis now beyond thee,
Less, in the universe, than thou in it ;
Yet deem not that thou canst escape it ; thou
Shalt soon return to earth, and all its dust :

'Tis part of thy eternity, and mine.

Cain. Where dost thou lead me ?

Lucifer. To what was before thee !
The phantasm of the world ; of which thy world
Is but the wreck.

Cain. What ! is it not then new ?

Lucifer. No more than life is ; and that was ere
thou

Or *I* were, or the things which seem to us
Greater than either : many things will have
No end ; and some, which would pretend to have
Had no beginning, have had one as mean
As thou ; and mightier things have been extinct
To make way for such meaner than we can
Surmise ; for *moments* only and the *space*
Have been and must be all *unchangeable*.
But changes make not death, except to clay ;
But thou art clay — and canst but comprehend
That which was clay, and such thou shalt behold.

Cain. Clay, spirit ! what thou wilt, I can survey.

Lucifer. Away then !

Cain. But the lights fade from me fast,
And some till now grew larger as we approach'd,
And wore the look of worlds.

Lucifer. And such they are.

Cain. And Edens in them ?

Lucifer. It may be.

Cain. And men ?

Lucifer. Yea, or things higher.

Cain. Ay ? and serpents too ?

Lucifer. Wouldst thou have men without them ? must
no reptiles

Breathe, save the erect ones ?

Cain. How the lights recede !

Where fly we ?

Lucifer. To the world of phantoms, which
Are beings past, and shadows still to come.

Cain. But it grows dark, and dark — the stars are
gone !

Lucifer. And yet thou seest.

Cain. 'T is a fearful light!
No sun, no moon, no lights innumerable.
The very blue of the empurpled night
Fades to a dreary twilight, yet I see
Huge dusky masses; but unlike the worlds
We were approaching, which, begirt with light,
Seem'd full of life even when their atmosphere
Of light gave way, and show'd them taking shapes
Unequal, of deep valleys and vast mountains;
And some emitting sparks, and some displaying
Enormous liquid plains, and some begirt
With luminous belts, and floating moons, which took,
Like them, the features of fair earth: — instead,
All here seems dark and dreadful.

Lucifer. But distinct.
Thou seekest to behold death, and dead things?

Cain. I seek it not; but as I know there are
Such, and that my sire's sin makes him and me,
And all that we inherit, liable
To such, I would behold at once, what I
Must one day see perforce.

Lucifer. Behold!

Cain. 'T is darkness.

Lucifer. And so it shall be ever; but we will
Unfold its gates!

Cain. Enormous vapours roll
Apart — what's this?

Lucifer. Enter!

Cain. Can I return?

Lucifer. Return! be sure: how else should death be
peopled?

Its present realm is thin to what it will be,
Through thee and thine.

Cain. The clouds still open wide
And wider, and make widening circles round us.

Lucifer. Advance!

Cain.

And thou !

Lucifer.

Fear not — without me thou
 Couldst not have gone beyond thy world. On ! on !
 [*They disappear through the clouds.*

*Hades.*¹*Enter LUCIFER and CAIN.*

Cain. How silent and how vast are these dim
 worlds !

For they seem more than one, and yet more peopled
 Than the huge brilliant luminous orbs which swung
 So thickly in the upper air, that I
 Had deem'd them rather the bright populace
 Of some all unimaginable Heaven,
 Than things to be inhabited themselves,
 But that on drawing near them I beheld

¹ [It is not very easy to perceive what natural or rational object the Devil proposes to himself in carrying his disciple through the abyss of space, to show him that repository of which we remember hearing something in our infant days, 'where the old moons are hung up to dry.' To prove that there is a life beyond the grave, was surely no part of his business when he was engaged in fostering the indignation of one who repined at the necessity of dying. And, though it would seem, that entire Hades is, in Lord Byron's picture, a place of suffering, yet, when Lucifer himself had premised that these sufferings were the lot of those spirits who had sided with him against Jehovah, is it likely that a more accurate knowledge of them would increase Cain's eagerness for the alliance, or that he would not rather have enquired whether a better fortune did not await the adherents of the triumphant side ? At all events, the spectacle of many ruined worlds was more likely to awe a mortal into submission, than to rouse him to hopeless resistance ; and, even if it made him a hater of God, had no natural tendency to render him furious against a brother who was to be his fellow-sufferer. — BISHOP HEBER.]

Their swelling into palpable immensity
Of matter, which seem'd made for life to dwell on,
Rather than life itself. But here, all is
So shadowy and so full of twilight, that
It speaks of a day past.

Lucifer. It is the realm
Of death.— Wouldst have it present?

Cain. Till I know
That which it really is, I cannot answer.
But if it be as I have heard my father
Deal out in his long homilies, 't is a thing —
Oh God! I dare not think on 't! Cursed be
He who invented life that leads to death!
Or the dull mass of life, that, being life,
Could not retain, but needs must forfeit it —
Even for the innocent!

Lucifer. Dost thou curse thy father?

Cain. Cursed he not me in giving me my birth?
Cursed he not me before my birth, in daring
To pluck the fruit forbidden?

Lucifer. Thou say'st well:
The curse is mutual 'twixt thy sire and thee —
But for thy sons and brother?

Cain. Let them share it
With me, their sire and brother! What else is
Bequeath'd to me? I leave them my inheritance.
Oh, ye interminable gloomy realms
Of swimming shadows and enormous shapes,
Some fully shown, some indistinct, and all
Mighty and melancholy — what are ye?
Live ye, or have ye lived?

Lucifer. Somewhat of both.

Cain. Then what is death?

Lucifer. What? Hath not he who made ye
Said 't is another life?

Cain. Till now he hath
Said nothing, save that all shall die.¹

¹ ["Death, the last and most dreadful of all evils, is so far from being one, that it is the infallible cure for all others—

'To die, is landing on some silent shore,
Where billows never beat, nor tempests roar :
Ere well we feel the friendly stroke, 't is o'er.' —GARTH.

But was it an evil ever so great, it could not be remedied but by one much greater, which is by living for ever, by which means our wickedness, unrestrained by the prospect of a future state, would grow so unsupportable, our sufferings so intolerable by perseverance, and our pleasures so tiresome by repetition, that no being in the universe could be so completely miserable as a species of immortal men. We have no reason, therefore, to look upon death as an evil, or to fear it as a punishment, even without any supposition of a future life : but if we consider it as a passage to a more perfect state, or a remove only in an eternal succession of still improving states (for which we have the strongest reasons), it will then appear a new favour from the divine beneficence. . . . The instability of human life, or of the changes of its successive periods, of which we so frequently complain, are no more than the necessary progress of it to this necessary conclusion ; and are so far from being evils deserving these complaints, that they are the source of our greatest pleasures, as they are the source of all novelty, from which our greatest pleasures are ever derived. The continual successions of seasons in the human life, by daily presenting to us new scenes, render it agreeable, and, like those of the year, afford us delights by their change, which the choicest of them could not give us by their continuance. In the spring of life, the gilding of the sun-shine, the verdure of the fields, and the variegated paintings of the sky, are so exquisite in the eyes of infants at their first looking abroad into a new world, as nothing perhaps afterwards can equal. The heat and vigour of the succeeding summer of youth ripen for us new pleasures,—the blooming maid, the nightly revel, and the jovial chase : the serene autumn of complete manhood feasts us with the golden harvests of our worldly pursuits : nor is the hoary winter of old age destitute of its peculiar comforts and enjoyments, of which the recollection and relation of those past are perhaps none of the least ; and at last death opens to us a new prospect, from whence we shall probably look back upon the diversions and occupations of this world with the same contempt we do now on our tops and hobby-horses, and with the same surprise that they could ever so much entertain or engage us." — JENYNS — "*These*," says Dr. Johnson, "*are sentiments which, though not new, may be read with pleasure and profit, in the thousandth repetition.*"

Lucifer. Perhaps
He one day will unfold that further secret.

Cain. Happy the day !

Lucifer. Yes ; happy ! when unfolded,
Through agonies unspeakable, and clogg'd
With agonies eternal, to innumerable
Yet unborn myriads of unconscious atoms,
All to be animated for this only !

Cain. What are these mighty phantoms which I
see

Floating around me ? — They wear not the form
Of the intelligences I have seen
Round our regretted and unenter'd Eden,
Nor wear the form of man as I have view'd it
In Adam's and in Abel's, and in mine,
Nor in my sister-bride's, nor in my children's .
And yet they have an aspect, which, though not
Of men nor angels, looks like something, which,
If not the last, rose higher than the first,
Haughty, and high, and beautiful, and full
Of seeming strength, but of inexplicable
Shape ; for I never saw such. They bear not
The wing of seraph, nor the face of man,
Nor form of mightiest brute, nor aught that is
Now breathing ; mighty yet and beautiful
As the most beautiful and mighty which
Live, and yet so unlike them, that I scarce
Can call them living.

Lucifer. Yet they lived.

Cain. Where ?

Lucifer. Where

Thou livest.

Cain. When ?

Lucifer. On what thou callest earth

They did inhabit.

Cain. Adam is the first.

Lucifer. Of thine, I grant thee — but too mean to be
The last of these.

Cain. And what are they?

Lucifer. That which
Thou shalt be.

Cain. But what *were* they?

Lucifer. Living, high,
Intelligent, good, great, and glorious things,
As much superior unto all thy sire,
Adam, could e'er have been in Eden, as
The sixty-thousandth generation shall be,
In its dull damp degeneracy, to
Thee and thy son; — and how weak they are, judge
By thy own flesh.

Cain. Ah me! and did *they* perish?

Lucifer. Yes, from their earth, as thou wilt fade from

Cain. But was *mine* theirs? [thine.

Lucifer. It was.

Cain. But not as now.

It is too little and too lowly to
Sustain such creatures.¹

Lucifer. True, it was more glorious.

Cain. And wherefore did it fall?

Lucifer. Ask him who fell.

¹ [“ If, according to some speculations, you could prove the world many thousands of years older than the Mosaic chronology — or if you could knock up Adam and Eve, and the Apple and Serpent — still, what is to be put up in their stead? — or how is the difficulty removed? Things must have had a beginning, and what matters it *when*, or *how*? I sometimes think that man may be the relic of some higher material being wrecked in a former world, and degenerated in the hardship and struggle through chaos into conformity, or something like it — as we see Laplanders, Esquimaux, &c., inferior, in the present date, as the elements become more inexorable. But even then, this higher pre-Adamite supposititious creation must have had an origin and a Creator; for a Creator is a more natural imagination than a fortuitous concurrence of atoms: all things remount to a fountain, though they may flow to an ocean.” — *Byron Diary*, 1821]

Cain. But how?

Lucifer. By a most crushing and inexorable
Destruction and disorder of the elements,
Which struck a world to chaos, as a chaos
Subsiding has struck out a world : such things,
Though rare in time, are frequent in eternity. —
Pass on, and gaze upon the past.

Cain. 'T is awful !

Lucifer. And true. Behold these phantoms ! they
Material as thou art. [were once

Cain. And must I be
Like them ?

Lucifer. Let He who made thee answer that.
I show thee what thy predecessors are,
And what they *were* thou feelest, in degree
Inferior as thy petty feelings and
Thy pettier portion of the immortal part
Of high intelligence and earthly strength.
What ye in common have with what they had
Is life, and what ye *shall* have — death : the rest
Of your poor attributes is such as suits
Reptiles engender'd out of the subsiding
Slime of a mighty universe, crush'd into
A scarcely-yet shaped planet, peopled with
Things whose enjoyment was to be in blindness —
A Paradise of Ignorance, from which
Knowledge was barr'd as poison. But behold
What these superior beings are or were :
Or, if it irk thee, turn thee back and till
'The earth, thy task — I'll waft thee there in safety
Cain. No : I'll stay here.'

Lucifer. How long?

Cain. For ever ! Since
I must one day return here from the earth,
I rather would remain ; I am sick of all
That dust has shown me — let me dwell in shadows.

Cain. And is.
It is not with the earth, though I must till it,
I feel at war, but that I may not profit
By what it bears of beautiful, untailing,
Nor gratify my thousand swelling thoughts
With knowledge, nor allay my thousand fears
Of death and life.

Lucifer. What thy world is, thou see'st,
But canst not comprehend the shadow of
That which it was.

Cain. And those enormous creatures,
Phantoms inferior in intelligence
(At least so seeming) to the things we have pass'd,
Resembling somewhat the wild habitants
Of the deep woods of earth, the hugest which
Roar nightly in the forest, but ten-fold
In magnitude and terror; taller than
The cherub-guarded walls of Eden, with
Eyes flashing like the fiery swords which fence them,
And tusks projecting like the trees stripp'd of
Their bark and branches — what were they?

Lucifer. That which
The Mammoth is in thy world; — but these lie
By myriads underneath its surface.

Cain. But
None on it? ¹

ment, till he falls into the frame of mind that leads to the catastrophe, from mere *internal* irritation, not premeditation, or envy of *Abel* (which would have made him contemptible), but from rage and fury against the inadequacy of his state to his conceptions, and which discharges itself rather against life, and the Author of life, than the mere living. His subsequent remorse is the natural effect of looking on his sudden deed. Had the deed been *premeditated*, his repentance would have been tardier."]

¹ [Hades is a place, in Lord Byron's description, very different from all that we had anticipated. He supposes that the world which we now inhabit had been preceded by many successive

Lucifer. No: for thy frail race to war
With them would render the curse on it useless —
'T would be destroy'd so early.

Cain. But why war?

Lucifer. You have forgotten the denunciation
Which drove your race from Eden — war with all
things,
And death to all things, and disease to most things,
And pangs, and bitterness; these were the fruits
Of the forbidden tree.

Cain. But animals —
Did they, too, eat of it, that they must die?

Lucifer. Your Maker told ye, *they* were made for you,
As you for him. — You would not have their doom
Superior to your own? Had Adam not
Fallen, all had stood.

Cain. Alas! the hopeless wretches!
They too must share my sire's fate, like his sons;
Like them, too, without having shared the apple:
Like them, too, without the so dear-bought *knowledge*!
It was a lying tree — for we *know* nothing.
At least it *promised knowledge* at the *price*
Of death — but *knowledge* still: but what *knows* man?

Lucifer. It may be death leads to the *highest know-*
ledge;
And being of all things the sole thing certain,

worlds, which had each, in turn, been created and ruined; and the inhabitants of which he describes, on grounds sufficiently probable for poetry, as proportioned, in bodily and intellectual strength, to those gigantic specimens of animal existence whose remains still perplex the naturalist. But he not only places the pre-Adamite giants in Hades, but the ghosts of the Mammoth and Megatherion, their contemporaries, and, above all, the phantoms of the worlds themselves which these beings inhabited, with their mountains, oceans, and forests, all gloomy and sad together, and (we suppose he means) in a state of eternal suffering. We really think that this belongs to that species of sublime, which is considerably less than a single step removed from the ridiculous. — HEBER.]

At least leads to the *surest* science: therefore
The tree was true, though deadly.

Cain. These dim realms
I see them, but I know them not.

Lucifer. Because
Thy hour is yet afar, and matter cannot
Comprehend spirit wholly — but 't is something
To know there are such realms.

Cain. We knew already
That there was death.

Lucifer. But not what was beyond it.

Cain. Nor know I now.

Lucifer. Thou knowest that there is
A state, and many states beyond thine own —
And this thou knewest not this morn.

Cain. But all
Seems dim and shadowy.

Lucifer. Be content; it will
Seem clearer to thine immortality.

Cain. And yon immeasurable liquid space
Of glorious azure which floats on beyond us,
Which looks like water, and which I should deem
'The river which flows out of Paradise
Past my own dwelling, but that it is bankless
And boundless, and of an ethereal hue —
What is it?

Lucifer. 'There is still some such on earth,
Although inferior, and thy children shall
Dwell near it — 't is the phantasm of an ocean.

Cain. 'T is like another world; a liquid sun —
And those inordinate creatures sporting o'er
Its shining surface?

Lucifer. Are its habitants,
The past leviathans.

Cain. And yon immense
Serpent, which rears his dripping mane and vasty

Head ten times higher than the haughtiest cedar
Forth from the abyss, looking as he could coil
Himself around the orbs we lately look'd on —
Is he not of the kind which bask'd beneath
The tree in Eden ?

Lucifer. Eve, thy mother, best
Can tell what shape of serpent tempted her.

Cain. This seems too terrible. No doubt the other
Had more of beauty.

Lucifer. Hast thou ne'er beheld him ?

Cain. Many of the same kind (at least so call'd),
But never that precisely which persuaded
The fatal fruit, nor even of the same aspect.

Lucifer. Your father saw him not ?

Cain. No : 't was my mother
Who tempted him — she tempted by the serpent.

Lucifer. Good man ! whene'er thy wife, or thy sons'
wives,

Tempt thee or them to aught that's new or strange,
Be sure thou see'st first who hath tempted *them*.

Cain. Thy precept comes too late : there is no more
For serpents to tempt woman to.

Lucifer. But there
Are some things still which woman may tempt man to,
And man tempt woman : — let thy sons look to it !
My counsel is a kind one ; for 't is even
Given chiefly at my own expense ; 't is true,
'T will not be follow'd, so there's little lost.

Cain. I understand not this.

Lucifer. The happier thou ! —
Thy world and thou are still too young ! Thou thinkest
Thyself most wicked and unhappy : is it
Not so ?

Cain. For crime, I know not ; but for pain,
I have felt much.

Lucifer. First-born of the first man !

Thy present state of sin — and thou art evil,
Of sorrow — and thou sufferest, are both Eden
In all its innocence compared to what
Thou shortly may'st be ; and that state again,
In its redoubled wretchedness, a Paradise
To what thy sons' sons' sons, accumulating
In generations like to dust (which they
In fact but add to), shall endure and do. —
Now let us back to earth !

Cain. And wherefore didst thou
Lead me here only to inform me this ?

Lucifer. Was not thy quest for knowledge ?

Cain. Yes ; as being
The road to happiness.

Lucifer. If truth be so,
Thou hast it.

Cain. Then my father's God did well
When he prohibited the fatal tree.

Lucifer. But had done better in not planting it.
But ignorance of evil doth not save
From evil ; it must still roll on the same,
A part of all things.

Cain. Not of all things. No.
I'll not believe it — for I thirst for good.

Lucifer. And who and what doth not ? *Who* covets
evil

For its own bitter sake ? — *None* — nothing ! 't is
The haven of all life, and lifelessness.

Cain. Within those glorious orbs which we behold,
Distant, and dazzling, and innumerable,
Ere we came down into this phantom realm,
Ill cannot come : they are too beautiful.

Lucifer. Thou hast seen them from afar.

Cain. And what of that ?
Distance can but diminish glory — they,
When nearer, must be more ineffable.

Lucifer. Approach the things of earth most beautiful,
And judge their beauty near.

Cain. I have done this —
The loveliest thing I know is loveliest nearest.

Lucifer. Then there must be delusion. — What is that,
Which being nearest to thine eyes is still
More beautiful than beauteous things remote ?

Cain. My sister Adah. — All the stars of heaven,
The deep blue noon of night, lit by an orb
Which looks a spirit, or a spirit's world —
The hues of twilight — the sun's gorgeous coming —
His setting indescribable, which fills
My eyes with pleasant tears as I behold
Him sink, and feel my heart float softly with him
Along that western paradise of clouds —
The forest shade—the green bough—the bird's voice —
The vesper bird's, which seems to sing of love,
And mingles with the song of cherubim,
As the day closes over Eden's walls ; —
All these are nothing, to my eyes and heart,
Like Adah's face : I turn from earth and heaven
To gaze on it.

Lucifer. 'T is fair as frail mortality,
In the first dawn and bloom of young creation,
And earliest embraces of earth's parents,
Can make its offspring ; still it is delusion.

Cain. You think so, being not her brother.

Lucifer. Mortal !
My brotherhood's with those who have no children.

Cain. Then thou canst have no fellowship with us.

Lucifer. It may be that thine own shall be for me.
But if thou dost possess a beautiful
Being beyond all beauty in thine eyes,
Why art thou wretched ?

Cain. Why do I exist ?
Why art thou wretched ? why are all things so ?

Ev'n he who made us must be, as the maker
 Of things unhappy ! To produce destruction
 Can surely never be the task of joy,
 And yet my sire says he's omnipotent ·
 Then why is evil — he being good ? I ask'd
 This question of my father ; and he said,
 Because this evil only was the path
 To good. Strange good, that must arise from out
 Its deadly opposite. ¹ I lately saw
 A lamb stung by a reptile the poor suckling
 Lay foaming on the earth, beneath the vain
 And piteous bleating of its restless dam ;
 My father pluck'd some herbs, and laid them to
 The wound ; and by degrees the helpless wretch
 Resumed its careless life, and rose to drain
 The mother's milk, who o'er it tremulous
 Stood licking its reviving limbs with joy.
 Behold, my son ! said Adam, how from evil
 Springs good !

Lucifer. What didst thou answer ?

Cain. Nothing ; for

He is my father : but I thought, that 't were
 A better portion for the animal
 Never to have been *stung at all*, than to
 Purchase renewal of its little life
 With agonies unutterable, though
 Dispell'd by antidotes.

Lucifer. But as thou saidst

[“ God Almighty !

There is some soul of goodness in things evil,
 Would men observingly distil it out ,
 For our bad neighbours make us early stirrers,
 Which is both healthful and good husbandry ;
 Besides, they are our outward consciences,
 And preachers to us all , admonishing,
 That we should dress us fairly for our end.
 Thus may we gather honey from the weed,
 And make a moral of the devil himself.” — SHAKESPEARE.]

Of all beloved things thou lovest her
Who shared thy mother's milk, and giveth hers
Unto thy children —

Cain. Most assuredly :

What should I be without her ?

Lucifer. What am I ?

Cain. Dost thou love nothing ?

Lucifer. What does thy God love ?

Cain. All things, my father says ; but I confess
I see it not in their allotment here.

Lucifer. And, therefore, thou canst not see if I love
Or no, except some vast and general purpose,
To which particular things must melt like snows.

Cain. Snows ! what are they ?

Lucifer. Be happier in not knowing
What thy remoter offspring must encounter ;
But bask beneath the clime which knows no winter.

Cain. But dost thou not love something like thy-
self ?

Lucifer. And dost thou love *thyself* ?

Cain. Yes, but love more

What makes my feelings more endurable,
And is more than myself, because I love it.

Lucifer. Thou lovest it, because 't is beautiful,
As was the apple in thy mother's eye ;
And when it ceases to be so, thy love
Will cease, like any other appetite.

Cain. Cease to be beautiful ! how can that be ?

Lucifer. With time.

Cain. But time has past, and hitherto
Even Adam and my mother both are fair :
Not fair like Adah and the seraphim —
But very fair.

Lucifer. All that must pass away
In them and her.

Cain. I'm sorry for it ; but

Cannot conceive my love for her the less :
 And when her beauty disappears, methinks
 He who creates all beauty will lose more
 Than me in seeing perish such a work.

Lucifer. I pity thee who lovest what must perish.

Cain. And I thee who lov'st nothing.

Lucifer. And thy brother —
 Sits he not near thy heart?

Cain. Why should he not?

Lucifer. Thy father loves him well -- so does thy God

Cain. And so do I.

Lucifer. 'T is well and meekly done.

Cain. Meekly !

Lucifer. He is the second born of flesh,
 And is his mother's favourite.

Cain. Let him keep
 Her favour, since the serpent was the first
 To win it.

Lucifer. And his father's?

Cain. What is that
 To me? should I not love that which all love?

Lucifer. And the Jehovah — the indulgent Lord,
 And bounteous planter of barr'd Paradise —
 He, too, looks smilingly on Abel.

Cain. I
 Ne'er saw him, and I know not if he smiles.

Lucifer. But you have seen his angels.

Cain. Rarely.

Lucifer. But
 Sufficiently to see they love your brother :
 His sacrifices are acceptable.

Cain. So be they ! wherefore speak to me of this?

Lucifer. Because thou hast thought of this ere now.

Cain. And if
 I have thought, why recall a thought that — (*he pauses,*
as agitated) — Spirit!

Here we are in *thy* world ; speak not of *mine*.
Thou hast shown me wonders : thou hast shown me
those

Mighty pre-Adamites who walk'd the earth
Of which ours is the wreck . thou hast pointed out
Myriads of starry worlds, of which our own
Is the dim and remote companion, in
Infinity of life · thou hast shown me shadows
Of that existence with the dreaded name
Which my sire brought us — Death ; ¹ thou hast shown
me much —

But not all : show me where Jehovah dwells,
In his especial Paradise — or *thine* .
Where is it ?

Lucifer. *Here*, and o'er all space.

Cain.

But ye

Have some allotted dwelling — as all things ;
Clay has its earth, and other worlds their tenants ;
All temporary breathing creatures their
Peculiar element ; and things which have [say'st ,
Long ceased to breathe *our* breath, have theirs, thou
And the Jehovah and thyself have thine —
Ye do not dwell together ?

Lucifer.

No, we reign

Together ; but our dwellings are asunder.

Cain. Would there were only one of ye ! perchance
An unity of purpose might make union
In elements which seem now jarr'd in storms.
How came ye, being spirits, wise and infinite,
To separate ? Are ye not as brethren in
Your essence, and your nature, and your glory ?

Lucifer. Art thou not Abel's brother ?

Cain.

We are brethren,

And so we shall remain ; but were it not so,

¹ [“ Which my sire shrinks from — Death.” — MS.]

Is spirit like to flesh? can it fall out?
 Infinity with Immortality?
 Jarring and turning space to misery —
 For what?

Lucifer. To reign.

Cain. Did ye not tell me that
 Ye are both eternal?

Lucifer. Yea!

Cain. And what I have seen,
 Yon blue immensity, is boundless?

Lucifer. Ay.

Cain. And cannot ye both *reign* then? — is there not
 Enough? — why should ye differ?

Lucifer. We both reign.

Cain. But one of you makes evil.

Lucifer. Which?

Cain. 'Thou! for
 If thou canst do man good, why dost thou not?

Lucifer. And why not he who made? *I* made ye not;
 Ye are *his* creatures, and not mine.

Cain. Then leave us
His creatures, as thou say'st we are, or show me
 Thy dwelling, or *his* dwelling.

Lucifer. I could show thee
 Both; but the time will come thou shalt see one
 Of them for evermore.¹

Cain. And why not now? [gather

Lucifer. Thy human mind hath scarcely grasp to
 The little I have shown thee into calm
 And clear thought; and *thou* wouldst go on aspiring

¹ [In Lord Byron's Diary for January 28 1821, we find the following entry:—

"*Thought for a speech of Lucifer, in the Tragedy of Cain.*

'Were *Death* an *evil*, would I let thee *live*?

Fool! live as I live — as thy father lives,

And thy sons' sons shall live for evermore!'"

To the great double Mysteries! the *two Principles*!¹
And gaze upon them on their secret thrones!

Dust! limit thy ambition; for to see
Either of these would be for thee to perish!

Cain. And let me perish, so I see them!

Lucifer. There

The son of her who snatch'd the apple spake!

But thou wouldst only perish, and not see them;

That sight is for the other state.

Cain. Of death?

Lucifer. That is the prelude.

Cain. Then I dread it less,

Now that I know it leads to something definite.

Lucifer. And now I will convey thee to thy world,

Where thou shalt multiply the race of Adam,

Eat, drink, toil, tremble, laugh, weep, sleep, and die.

Cain. And to what end have I beheld these things
Which thou hast shown me?

Lucifer. Didst thou not require

Knowledge? And have I not, in what I show'd,

Taught thee to know thyself?

Cain. Alas! I seem

Nothing.

¹ ["It would be to no purpose, to suppose two such opposite principles. For, admit that a being infinitely mischievous were infinitely cunning, and infinitely powerful, yet it could do no evil, because the opposite principle, of infinite goodness, being also infinitely wise and powerful, they would tie up one another's hands: so that, upon this supposition, the notion of a deity would signify just nothing; and, by virtue of the eternal opposition and equality of these principles, they would keep one another at perpetual bay; and, being an equal match for one another, instead of being two deities, they would be two idols, able to do neither good nor evil." — TILLOTSON. "Moral evil is occasioned by free will, which implies choice between good and evil. With all the evil that there is, there is no man but would rather be a free agent, than a mere machine without the evil; and what is best for each individual must be best for the whole. If a man would rather be the machine, I cannot agree with him." — JOHNSON.]

Lucifer. And this should be the human sum
Of knowledge, to know mortal nature's nothingness;
Bequeath that science to thy children, and
'T will spare them many tortures.

Cain. Haughty spirit !
Thou speak'st it proudly ; but thyself, though proud,
Hast a superior.

Lucifer. No ! By heaven, which He
Holds, and the abyss, and the immensity
Of worlds and life, which I hold with him — No !
I have a victor — true ; but no superior.
Homage he has from all — but none from me :
I battle it against him, as I battled
In highest heaven. Through all eternity,
And the unfathomable gulfs of Hades,
And the interminable realms of space,
And the infinity of endless ages,
All, all, will I dispute ! And world by world,
And star by star, and universe by universe,
Shall tremble in the balance, till the great
Conflict shall cease, if ever it shall cease,
Which it ne'er shall, till he or I be quench'd !
And what can quench our immortality,
Or mutual and irrevocable hate ?
He as a conqueror will call the conquer'd
Evil ; but what will be the *good* he gives ?
Were I the victor, *his* works would be deem'd
The only evil ones. And you, ye new
And scarce born mortals, what have been his gifts
To you already, in your little world ? ¹

¹ [' Whatever we enjoy is purely a free gift from our Creator, but, that we enjoy no more can never sure be deem'd an injury, or a just reason to question his infinite benevolence. All our happiness is owing to his goodness, but that it is no greater, is owing only to ourselves ; that is, to our not having any inherent right to any happiness, or even to any existence at all.' — JENYNS.]

Cam. But few ; and some of those but bitter.

Lucifer.

Back

With me, then, to thine earth, and try the rest
Of his celestial boons to you and yours.

Evil and good are things in their own essence,
And not made good or evil by the giver ;

But if he gives you good — so call him ; if
Evil springs from *him*, do not name it *mine*,
Till ye know better its true fount ; and judge
Not by words, though of spirits, but the fruits
Of your existence, such as it must be.

One good gift has the fatal apple given —

Your *reason* : — let it not be over-sway'd

By tyrannous threats to force you into faith

Gainst all external sense and inward feeling :

Think and endure, — and form an inner world

In your own bosom — where the outward fails ;

So shall you nearer be the spiritual

Nature, and war triumphant with your own.¹

[*They disappear.*

¹ [As to the question of the origin of evil, which is the burthen of this misdirected verse, Lord Byron has neither thrown any new light upon it, nor darkened the previous knowledge which we possessed. His Lordship may, it is true, have recapitulated some of the arguments with a more concise and cavalier air than the old schoolmen or fathers ; but the result is the same. There is no poetical road to metaphysics. In one view, however, which our rhapsodist has taken on the subject, we conceive he has done well. He represents the temptations held out to Cam by Satan, as constantly succeeding and corresponding to some previous discontent and gloomy disposition in his own mind ; so that Lucifer is little more than the personified demon of his imagination : and further, the acts of guilt and folly into which Cam is hurried are not treated as accidental, or as occasioned by passing causes, but as springing from an internal fury, a morbid state akin to phrensy, a mind dissatisfied with itself and all things, and haunted by an insatiable stubborn longing after knowledge rather than happiness, and a fatal proneness to dwell on the evil side of things rather than the good. We here see the dreadful consequences of not curbing this disposition (which is, after all, perhaps, the sin that most easily

ACT III.

SCENE I

The Earth, near Eden, as in Act I.

Enter CAIN and ADAM.

Adah. Hush ! tread softly, Cain.

Cain. I will ; but wherefore ?

Adah. Our little Enoch sleeps upon yon bed
Of leaves, beneath the cypress.

Cain. Cypress ! 't is
A gloomy tree, which looks as if it mourn'd
O'er what it shadows ; wherefore didst thou choose it
For our child's canopy ?

Adah. Because its branches
Shut out the sun like night, and therefore seem'd
Fitting to shadow slumber.

Cain. Ay, the last —
And longest ; but no matter — lead me to him.
[*They go up to the child.*
How lovely he appears ! his little cheeks,
In their pure incarnation, vying with
The rose leaves strewn beneath them.

Adah. And his lips, too,
How beautifully parted ! No ; you shall not
Kiss him, at least not now : he will awake soon —
His hour of mid-day rest is nearly over ;
But it were pity to disturb him till
'T is closed.

besets humanity,) exemplified in a striking point of view ; and we so far think, that the moral to be derived from a perusal of this Mystery is a valuable one. — JEFFREY.]

Cain. You have said well ; I will contain
My heart till then. He smiles, and sleeps ! — Sleep on,
And smile, thou little, young inheritor
Of a world scarce less young : sleep on, and smile !
Thine are the hours and days when both are cheering
And innocent ! *thou* hast not pluck'd the fruit —
Thou know'st not thou art naked ! Must the time
Come thou shalt be amerced for sins unknown,
Which were not mine nor thine ? But now sleep on !
His cheeks are reddening into deeper smiles,
And shining lids are trembling o'er his long
Lashes, dark as the cypress which waves o'er them ;
Half open, from beneath them the clear blue
Laughs out, although in slumber. He must dream —
Of what ? Of Paradise ! — Ay ! dream of it,
My disinherited boy ! 'T is but a dream ;
For never more thyself, thy sons, nor fathers,
Shall walk in that forbidden place of joy !¹

Adah. Dear Cain ! Nay, do not whisper o'er our son
Such melancholy yearnings o'er the past :
Why wilt thou always mourn for Paradise ?
Can we not make another ?

Cain. Where ?

Adah. Here, or
Where'er thou wilt : where'er thou art, I feel not
The want of this so much regretted Eden.
Have I not thee, our boy, our sire, and brother,
And Zillah — our sweet sister, and our Eve,
To whom we owe so much besides our birth ?

Cain. Yes — death, too, is amongst the debts we owe
her. [hence,

Adah. Cain ! that proud spirit, who withdrew thee

¹ [The censorious may say what they will, but there are speeches in the mouth of Cain and Adah, especially regarding their child, which nothing in English poetry but the "wood-notes wild" of Shakspeare ever equalled. — SIR FERGION BRIDGES.]

Hath sadden'd thine still deeper. I had hoped
 The promised wonders which thou hast beheld,
 Visions, thou say'st, of past and present worlds,
 Would have composed thy mind into the calm
 Of a contented knowledge; but I see
 Thy guide hath done thee evil: still I thank him,
 And can forgive him all, that he so soon
 Hath given thee back to us.

Cain.

So soon?

Adah.

'T is scarcely

Two hours since ye departed: two *long* hours
 To *me*, but only *hours* upon the sun.

Cain. And yet I have approach'd that sun, and seen
 Worlds which he once shone on, and never more
 Shall light; and worlds he never lit. methought
 Years had roll'd o'er my absence.

Adah.

Hardly hours.

Cain. The mind then hath capacity of time,
 And measures it by that which it beholds,
 Pleasing or painful; little or almighty.
 I had beheld the immemorial works
 Of endless beings; skirr'd extinguisht worlds;
 And, gazing on eternity, methought
 I had borrow'd more by a few drops of ages
 From its immensity: but now I feel
 My littleness again. Well said the spirit,
 That I was nothing!

Adah.

Wherefore said he so?

Jehovah said not that.

Cain.

No: *he* contents him

With making us the *nothing* which we are;
 And after flattering dust with glimpses of
 Eden and Immortality, resolves
 It back to dust again — for what?

Adah.

Thou know'st —

Even for our parents' error.

Cain. What is that
To us? they sinn'd, then *let them* die!

Adah. Thou hast not spoken well, nor is that thought
Thy own, but of the spirit who was with thee.
Would *I* could die for them, so *they* might live!

Cain. Why, so say I — provided that one victim
Might satiate the insatiable of life,
And that our little rosy sleeper there
Might never taste of death nor human sorrow,
Nor hand it down to those who spring from him.

Adah. How know we that some such atonement one
day
May not redeem our race?

Cain. By sacrificing
The harmless for the guilty? what atonement
Were there? why, *we* are innocent: what have we
Done, that we must be victims for a deed
Before our birth, or need have victims to
Atone for this mysterious, nameless sin —
If it be such a sin to seek for knowledge?

Adah. Alas! thou sinnest now, my Cain: thy words
Sound impious in mine ears.

Cain. Then leave me!

Adah. Never,
Though thy God left thee.

Cain. Say, what have we here?

Adah. Two altars, which our brother Abel made
During thine absence, whereupon to offer
A sacrifice to God on thy return.

Cain. And how knew *he*, that *I* would be so ready
With the burnt offerings, which he daily brings
With a meek brow, whose base humility
Shows more of fear than worship, as a bribe
To the Creator?

Adah. Surely, 't is well done.

Cain. One altar may suffice; *I* have no offering.

Adah. The fruits of the earth, the early, beautiful Blossom and bud, and bloom of flowers, and fruits ; These are a goodly offering to the Lord, Given with a gentle and a contrite spirit.

Cain. I have toil'd, and till'd, and sweaten in the sun, According to the curse : — must I do more ? For what should I be gentle ? for a war With all the elements ere they will yield The bread we eat ? For what must I be grateful ? For being dust, and groveling in the dust, Till I return to dust ? If I am nothing — For nothing shall I be an hypocrite, And seem well-pleased with pain ? For what should I Be contrite ? for my father's sin, already Expiate with what we all have undergone, And to be more than expiated by The ages prophesied, upon our seed. Little deems our young blooming sleeper, there, The germs of an eternal misery To myriads is within him ! better 't were I snatch'd him in his sleep, and dash'd him 'gainst The rocks, than let him live to ——

Adah. Oh, my God !
Touch not the child — my child ! *thy* child ! Oh Cain .

Cain. Fear not ! for all the stars, and all the power Which sways them, I would not accost yon infant With ruder greeting than a father's kiss.

Adah. Then, why so awful in thy speech ?

Cain I said,
'T were better that he ceased to live, than give Life to so much of sorrow as he must Endure, and, harder still, bequeath ; but since That saying jars you, let us only say —
'T were better that he never had been born.

Adah. Oh, do not say so ! Where were then the joys, The mother's joys of watching, nourishing,

And loving him? Soft! he awakes. Sweet Enoch!
[*She goes to the child.*]

Oh Cain! look on him; see how full of life,
Of strength, of bloom, of beauty, and of joy,
How like to me — how like to thee, when gentle,
For *then* we are *all* alike; is't not so, Cain?
Mother, and sire, and son, our features are
Reflected in each other; as they are
In the clear waters, when *they* are *gentle*, and
When *thou* art *gentle*. Love us, then, my Cain!
And love thyself for our sakes, for we love thee.
Look! how he laughs and stretches out his arms,
And opens wide his blue eyes upon thine,
To hail his father; while his little form
Flutters as wing'd with joy. Talk not of pain!
The childless cherubs well might envy thee
The pleasures of a parent! Bless him, Cain!
As yet he hath no words to thank thee, but
His heart will, and thine own too.¹

Cain. Bless thee, boy!
If that a mortal blessing may avail thee,
To save thee from the serpent's curse!²

Adah. It shall.
Surely a father's blessing may avert
A reptile's subtlety.

Cain. Of that I doubt;
But bless him ne'er the less.

Adah. Our brother comes.
Cain. Thy brother Abel.

¹ [The third act shows us Cain gloomily lamenting over the future fortunes of his infant son, and withstanding all the consolation and entreaties of Adah, who is anxious to soften him to the task of submission and to a participation in the sacrifice which his brother is about to offer. Here are some passages of no common beauty. That which strikes us most is when the parents are hanging over their sleeping boy. — BISHOP HEBER.]

Enter ABEL.

Abel. Welcome, Cain! My brother,
The peace of God be on thee!

Cain. Abel, hail!

Abel. Our sister tells me that thou hast been wander-
In high communion with a spirit, far [ing,
Beyond our wonted range. Was he of those
We have seen and spoken with, like to our father?

Cain. No.

Abel. Why then commune with him? he may be
A foe to the Most High.

Cain. And friend to man.
Has the Most High been so — if so you term him?

Abel. Term him! your words are strange to-day, my
My sister Adah, leave us for awhile — [brother.
We mean to sacrifice.

Adah. Farewell, my Cain;
But first embrace thy son. May his soft spirit,
And Abel's pious ministry, recall thee
To peace and holiness!

[*Exit ADAM, with her child.*

Abel. Where hast thou been?

Cain. I know not.

Abel. Nor what thou hast seen?

Cain. The dead,
The immortal, the unbounded, the omnipotent,
The overpowering mysteries of space —
The innumerable worlds that were and are —
A whirlwind of such overwhelming things,
Suns, moons, and earths, upon their loud-voiced spheres
Singing in thunder round me, as have made me
Unfit for mortal converse: leave me, Abel.

Abel. Thine eyes are flashing with unnatural light —
Thy cheek is flush'd with an unnatural hue —
Thy words are fraught with an unnatural sound —
What may this mean?

Cain. It means — I pray thee, leave me.

Abel. Not till we have pray'd and sacrificed together.

Cain. Abel, I pray thee, sacrifice alone —
Jehovah loves thee well.

Abel. Both well, I hope.

Cain. But thee the better : I care not for that ;
'Thou art fitter for his worship than I am ;
Revere him, then — but let it be alone —
At least, without me.

Abel. Brother, I should ill
Deserve the name of our great father's son,
If, as my elder, I revered thee not,
And in the worship of our God call'd not
On thee to join me, and precede me in
Our priesthood — 't is thy place.

Cain. But I have ne'er
Asserted it.

Abel. The more my grief ; I pray thee
To do so now : thy soul seems labouring in
Some strong delusion ; it will calm thee.

Cain. No ;
Nothing can calm me more. *Calm* say I ? Never
Knew I what calm was in the soul, although
I have seen the elements still'd. My Abel, leave
me !

Or let me leave thee to thy pious purpose.

Abel. Neither ; we must perform our task together.
Spurn me not.

Cain. If it must be so — well, then,
What shall I do ?

Abel. Choose one of those two altars.

Cain. Choose for me : they to me are so much turf
And stone.

Abel. Choose thou !

Cain. I have chosen.

Abel. 'T is the highest,

And suits thee, as the elder. Now prepare
Thine offerings.

Cain. Where are thine ?

Abel. Behold them here —
The firstlings of the flock, and fat thereof —
A shepherd's humble offering.

Cain. I have no flocks ;
I am a tiller of the ground, and must
Yield what it yieldeth to my toil — its fruit :
[*He gathers fruits.*

Behold them in their various bloom and ripeness.
[*They dress their altars, and kindle a flame upon them.*

Abel. My brother, as the elder, offer first
Thy prayer and thanksgiving with sacrifice.

Cain. No — I am new to this ; lead thou the way,
And I will follow — as I may.

Abel (kneeling). Oh God !
Who made us, and who breathed the breath of life
Within our nostrils, who hath blessed us,
And spared, despite our father's sin, to make
His children all lost, as they might have been,
Had not thy justice been so temper'd with
The mercy which is thy delight, as to
Accord a pardon like a Paradise,
Compared with our great crimes :— Sole Lord of light,
Of good, and glory, and eternity !
Without whom all were evil, and with whom
Nothing can err, except to some good end
Of thine omnipotent benevolence —
Inscrutable, but still to be fulfill'd —
Accept from out thy humble first of shepherd's
First of the first-born flocks — an offering,
In itself nothing — as what offering can be
Aught unto thee ? — but yet accept it for
The thanksgiving of him who spreads it in
The face of thy high heaven, bowing his own

Even to the dust, of which he is, in honour
Of thee, and of thy name, for evermore !

Cain (standing erect during this speech). Spirit
whate'er or whosoe'er thou art,

Omnipotent, it may be — and, if good,
Shown in the exemption of thy deeds from evil ;
Jehovah upon earth ! and God in heaven !
And it may be with other names, because
Thine attributes seem many, as thy works : —
If thou must be propitiated with prayers,
Take them ! If thou must be induced with altars,
And soften'd with a sacrifice, receive them !
Two beings here erect them unto thee.
If thou lov'st blood, the shepherd's shine, which smokes
On my right hand, hath shed it for thy service
In the first of his flock, whose limbs now reek
In sanguinary incense to thy skies ;
Or if the sweet and blooming fruits of earth,
And milder seasons, which the unstain'd turf
I spread them on now offers in the face
Of the broad sun which ripen'd them, may seem
Good to thee, inasmuch as they have not
Suffer'd in limb or life, and rather form
A sample of thy works, than supplication
To look on ours ! If a shrine without victim,
And altar without gore, may win thy favour,
Look on it ! and for him who dresseth it,
He is — such as thou mad'st him ; and seeks nothing
Which must be won by kneeling : if he's evil,
Strike him ! thou art omnipotent, and may'st —
For what can he oppose ? If he be good,
Strike him, or spare him, as thou wilt ! since all
Rests upon thee ; and good and evil seem
To have no power themselves, save in thy will ;
And whether that be good or ill I know not,
Not being omnipotent, nor fit to judge

Omnipotence, but merely to endure
Its mandate ; which thus far I have endured.

[*The fire upon the altar of ABEL kindles into a column of the brightest flame, and ascends to heaven ; while a whirlwind throws down the altar of CAIN, and scatters the fruits abroad upon the earth.*

Abel (kneeling). Oh, brother, pray ! Jehovah's wroth
with thee.

Cain. Why so ?

Abel. Thy fruits are scatter'd on the earth.

Cain. From earth they came, to earth let them
return ;

Their seed will bear fresh fruit there ere the summer
Thy burnt flesh-off'ring prospers better ; see
How heav'n licks up the flames, when thick with
blood !

Abel. Think not upon my offering's acceptance,
But make another of thine own before
It is too late.

Cain. I will build no more altars,
Nor suffer any. —

Abel (rising). Cain ! what meanest thou ?

Cain. To cast down yon vile flatt'rer of the clouds,
The smoky harbinger of thy dull pray'rs—
Thine altar, with its blood of lambs and kids,
Which fed on milk, to be destroy'd in blood.

Abel (opposing him). Thou shalt not : — add not
impious works to impious
Words ! let that altar stand — 't is hallow'd now
By the immortal pleasure of Jehovah,
In his acceptance of the victims.

Cain. *His !*

His pleasure ! what was his high pleasure in
The fumes of scorching flesh and smoking blood,
To the pain of the bleating mothers, which

Still yearn for their dead offspring? or the pangs
Of the sad ignorant victims underneath
Thy pious knife? Give way! this bloody record
Shall not stand in the sun, to shame creation!

Abel. Brother, give back! thou shalt not touch my
altar

With violence: if that thou wilt adopt it,
To try another sacrifice, 't is thine.

Cain. Another sacrifice! Give way, or else
That sacrifice may be ——

Abel. What mean'st thou?

Cain. Give —
Give way! — thy God loves blood! — then look to
it: —

Give way, ere he hath more!

Abel. In his great name,
I stand between thee and the shrine which hath
Had his acceptance.

Cain. If thou lov'st thyself,
Stand back till I have strew'd this turf along
Its native soil: — else ——

Abel (opposing him). I love God far more
Than life.¹

*Cain (striking him with a brand, on the temples, which
he snatches from the altar).* Then take thy life
unto thy God,
Since he loves lives.

¹ [It is evident that Lord Byron had studied his subject very deeply; and, though he has varied a little from, or gone a little beyond the letter of Scripture, which is very concise, yet he has apparently entered with great exactness into the minds of Ca'n and Abel in this most interesting scene: and were it allowable to ascribe to the author of a dramatic work the principles or feelings of all or any of his characters, except as adopting them for his particular purpose, one would be at a loss to say, whether Lord Byron ought most to be identified with Cain, or with Abel; so appropriately has he maintained the character of each.—GRANT'S "*Notes on Cain.*" p. 401.]

Abel (falls). What hast thou done, my brother ?

Cain. Brother !

Abel. Oh, God ! receive thy servant, and
Forgive his slayer, for he knew not what
He did — Cain, give me — give me thy hand ; and tell
Poor Zillah —

Cain (after a moment's stupefaction). My hand ! 't is
all red, and with ——

What ?

[*A long pause. — Looking slowly round.*

Where am I ? alone ! Where 's Abel ? where
Cain ? Can it be that I am he ? My brother,
Awake ! — why liest thou so on the green earth ?
'T is not the hour of slumber : — why so pale ?
What, hast thou ! —— thou wert full of life this morn !
Abel ! I pray thee, mock me not ! I smote
Too fiercely, but not fatally. Ah, why
Wouldst thou oppose me ? This is mockery ;
And only done to daunt me : — 't was a blow —
And but a blow. Stir — stir — nay, only stir !
Why, so — that 's well ! — thou breath'st ! breathe upon
me !

Oh, God ! Oh, God !

Abel (very faintly). What 's he who speaks of God ?

Cain. Thy murderer.

Abel. Then may God forgive him ! Cain,
Comfort poor Zillah : — she has but one brother
Now.

[*ABEL dies.* ¹

¹ [As a whole, this scene is heavy and clumsily managed. It can hardly fail to strike the reader as a defect in poetry, no less than a departure from history, that the event which is the catastrophe of the drama, is no otherwise than incidentally, we may say accidentally, produced by those which precede it. Cain, whose whole character is represented in Scripture as envious and malicious, rather than impious ; — this Cain, as painted by Lord Byron, has no quarrel with his brother whatever, nor, except in a single word, does he intimate any jealousy of him. Two acts, and half the third, are passed without our advancing a single step towards

Cain. And I none! — Who makes me brotherless?
 His eyes are open! then he is not dead!
 Death is like sleep; and sleep shuts down our lids.
 His lips, too, are apart; why then he breathes;
 And yet I feel it not. — His heart! — his heart! —
 Let me see, doth it beat? methinks — No! — no!
 This is a vision, else I am become
 The native of another and worse world.
 The earth swims round me: — what is this? — 't is wet;
 [Puts his hand to his brow, and then looks at it.]
 And yet there are no dews! 'T is blood — my blood —
 My brother's and my own! and shed by me!
 Then what have I further to do with life,
 Since I have taken life from my own flesh?
 But he can not be dead! — Is silence death?
 No; he will wake; then let me watch by him.
 Life cannot be so slight, as to be quenched
 Thus quickly! — he hath spoken to me since —
 What shall I say to him? — My brother! — No:
 He will not answer to that name; for brethren
 Smite not each other. Yet — yet — speak to me.
 Oh! for a word more of that gentle voice,
 That I may bear to hear my own again!

Enter ZILLAH.

Zillah. I heard a heavy sound; what can it be?
 'T is Cain; and watching by my husband. What
 Dost thou there, brother? Doth he sleep? Oh, heav'n!

the conclusion; and Abel at length falls by a random blow given in a struggle of which the object is not his destruction, but the overthrow of Jehovah's altar. If we could suppose a reader to sit down to a perusal of the drama in ignorance of its catastrophe, he could scarcely be less surprised by its termination in such a stroke of chance-medley, than if Abel had been made to drop down in an apoplexy, or Cain to die of grief over his body. — BISHOP HEBER.]

What means this paleness, and yon stream? — No^c, no !
It is not blood ; for who would shed his blood ?

Abel ! what's this? — who hath done this? He
moves not ;

He breathes not : and his hands drop down from mine
With stony lifelessness ! Ah ! cruel Cain !

Why cam'st thou not in time to save him from
This violence? Whatever hath assail'd him,
Thou wert the stronger, and should'st have stepp'd in
Between him and aggression ! Father ! — Eve ! —
Adah ! — come hither ! Death is in the world !

[*Exit ZILLAH, calling on her Parents, &c.*

Cain (solus). And who hath brought him there? —
I — who abhor

The name of Death so deeply, that the thought
Empoison'd all my life, before I knew
His aspect — I have led him here, and giv'n
My brother to his cold and still embrace,
As if he would not have asserted his
Inexorable claim without my aid.
I am awake at last — a dreary dream.
Had madden'd me ; — but *he* shall ne'er awake !

Enter ADAM, EVE, ADAH, and ZILLAH.

Adam. A voice of woe from Zillah brings me
here. —

What do I see? — 'T is true ! — My son ! — my son !
Woman, behold the serpent's work, and thine !

[*To EVE.*

Eve. Oh ! speak not of it now : the serpent's fangs
Are in my heart. My best beloved, Abel !
Jehovah ! this is punishment beyond
A mother's sin, to take *him* from me !

Adam.

Who,

Or what hath done this deed? — speak, Cain, since thou
Wert present ; was it some more hostile angel,

Who walks not with Jehovah? or some wild
Brute of the forest?

Eve. Ah! a livid light
Breaks through, as from a thunder-cloud! yon brand,
Massy and bloody! snatch'd from off the altar,
And black with smoke, and red with ——

Adam. Speak, my son!
Speak, and assure us, wretched as we are,
That we are not more miserable still.

Adah. Speak, Cain! and say it was not thou!

Eve. It was.

I see it now — he hangs his guilty head,
And covers his ferocious eye with hands
Incarnadine.

Adah. Mother, thou dost him wrong —
Cain! clear thee from this horrible accusal,
Which grief wrings from our parent.

Eve. Hear, Jehovah!
May the eternal serpent's curse be on him!
For he was fitter for his seed than ours.
May all his days be desolate! May ——

Adah. Hold!
Curse him not, mother, for he is thy son —
Curse him not, mother, for he is my brother,
And my betroth'd.

Eve. He hath left thee no brother —
Zillah no husband — me *no son*! — for thus
I curse him from my sight for evermore!
All bonds I break between us, as he broke
That of his nature, in yon —— Oh death! death!
Why didst thou not take *me*, who first incurr'd thee?
Why dost thou not so now?

Adam. Eve! let not this,
Thy natural grief, lead to impiety!
A heavy doom was long forespoken to us;
And now that it begins, let it be borne

In such sort as may show our God, that we
Are faithful servants to his holy will.

*Eve (pointing to Cain). His will ! ! the will of yon
incarnate spirit*

Of death, whom I have brought upon the earth
To strew it with the dead. May all the curses
Of life be on him ! and his agonies
Drive him forth o'er the wilderness, like us
From Eden, till his children do'by him
As he did by his brother ! May the swords
And wings of fiery cherubim pursue him
By day and night — snakes spring up in his path —
Earth's fruits be ashes in his mouth — the leaves
On which he lays his head to sleep be strew'd
With scorpions ! May his dreams be of his victim !
His waking a continual dread of death !
May the clear rivers turn to blood as he
Stoops down to stain them with his raging lip !
May every element shun or change to him !
May he live in the pangs which others die with !
And death itself wax something worse than death
To him who first acquainted him with man !
Hence, fratricide ! henceforth that word is *Cain*,
Through all the coming myriads of mankind,
Who shall abhor thee, though thou wert their sire !
May the grass wither from thy feet ! the woods
Deny thee shelter ! earth a home ! the dust
A grave ! the sun his light ! and heaven her God !¹

[*Exit EVE.*]

¹ [The last three lines were not in the original MS. In forwarding them to Mr. Murray, to be added to Eve's speech, Lord Byron says — "There's as pretty a piece of imprecation for you, when joined to the lines already sent, as you may wish to meet with in the course of your business. But don't forget the addition of these three lines, which are clinchers to Eve's speech. Let me know what Gifford thinks, for I have a good opinion of the piece, as poetry ; it is in my gay metaphysical style, and in the Manfred line."]

Adam. Cain ! get thee forth : we dwell no more together.

Depart ! and leave the dead to me — I am
Henceforth alone — we never must meet more.

Adah. Oh, part not with him thus, my father : do
not

Add thy deep curse to Eve's upon his head !

Adam. I curse him not : his spirit be his curse.
Come, Zillah !

Zillah. I must watch my husband's corse.

Adam. We will return again, when he is gone
Who hath provided for us this dread office.
Come, Zillah !

Zillah. Yet one kiss on yon pale clay,
And those lips once so warm — my heart ! my heart !

[*Exeunt ADAM and ZILLAH, weeping.*]

Adah. Cain ! thou hast heard, we must go forth. I
am ready,
So shall our children be. I will bear Enoch,
And you his sister. Ere the sun declines
Let us depart, nor walk the wilderness
Under the cloud of night. — Nay, speak to me.
To me — *thine own.*

Cain. Leave me !

Adah. Why, all have left thee.

Cain. And wherefore lingerest thou ? Dost thou
not fear

To dwell with one who hath done this ?

Adah. I fear

Nothing except to leave thee, much as I
Shrink from the deed which leaves thee brotherless.
I must not speak of this — it is between thee
And the great God.

A Voice from within exclaims, Cain ! Cain !

Adah. Hear'st thou that voice ?

The Voice within. Cain ! Cain !

Adah. It soundeth like an angel's tone.

Enter the ANGEL of the Lord.

Angel. Where is thy brother Abel ?

Cain.

Am I then

My brother's keeper ?

Angel.

Cain ! what hast thou done ?

The voice of thy slain brother's blood cries out,
Even from the ground, unto the Lord !—Now art thou
Cursed from the earth, which opened late her mouth
To drink thy brother's blood from thy rash hand.
Henceforth, when thou shalt till the ground, it shall
not

Yield thee her strength ; a fugitive shalt thou
Be from this day, and vagabond on earth !

Adah. This punishment is more than he can bear.
Behold, thou drivest him from the face of earth,
And from the face of God shall he be hid.
A fugitive and vagabond on earth,
'T will come to pass, that whoso findeth him
Shall slay him.

Cain. Would they could ! but who are they
Shall slay me ? Where are these on the lone earth
As yet unpeopled ?

Angel. Thou hast slain thy brother,
And who shall warrant thee against thy son ?

Adah. Angel of Light ! be merciful, nor say
That this poor aching breast now nourishes
A murderer in my boy, and of his father.

Angel. Then he would but be what his father is.
Did not the milk of Eve give nutriment
To him thou now see'st so besmear'd with blood ?
The fratricide might well engender parricides. —
But it shall not be so — the Lord thy God
And mine commandeth me to set his seal

On Cain, so that he may go forth in safety.
Who slayeth Cain, a sevenfold vengeance shall
Be taken on his head. Come hither !

Cain. What
Wouldst thou with me

Angel. To mark upon thy brow
Exemption from such deeds as thou hast done.

Cain. No, let me die !

Angel. It must not be.

[*The ANGEL sets the mark on CAIN's brow.*

Cain. It burns

My brow, but nought to that which is within it.
Is there more ? let me meet it as I may.

Angel. Stern hast thou been and stubborn from the
womb,

As the ground thou must henceforth till ; but he
Thou slew'st was gentle as the flocks he tended.

Cain. After the fall too soon was I begotten ;
Ere yet my mother's mind subsided from
The serpent, and my sire still mourn'd for Eden.
That which I am, I am ; I did not seek
For life, nor did I make myself ; but could I
With my own death redeem him from the dust —
And why not so ? let him return to day,
And I lie ghastly ! so shall be restored
By God the life to him he loved ; and taken
From me a being I ne'er loved to bear.

Angel. Who shall heal murder ? what is done, is
done ;

Go forth ! fulfil thy days ! and be thy deeds

Unlike the last ! [*The ANGEL disappears*

Adam. He's gone, let us go forth ;
I hear our little Enoch cry within
Our bower.

Cain. Ah ! little knows he what he weeps for !
And I who have shed blood cannot shed tears !

But the four rivers ¹ would not cleanse my soul.
Think'st thou my boy will bear to look on me?

Adah. If I thought that he would not, I would —

Cain (*interrupting her*). No,

No more of threats; we have had too many of them:
Go to our children; I will follow thee.

Adah. I will not leave thee lonely with the dead,
Let us depart together.²

Cain. Oh! thou dead
And everlasting witness! whose unsinking
Blood darkens earth and heaven! what thou *now* art
I know not! but if *thou* see'st what *I am*,
I think thou wilt forgive him, whom his God
Can ne'er forgive, nor his own soul. — Farewell!
I must not, dare not touch what I have made thee.
I, who sprung from the same womb with thee, drain'd
The same breast, clasp'd thee often to my own,
In fondness brotherly and boyish, I
Can never meet thee more, nor even dare
To do that for thee, which thou shouldst have done
For me — compose thy limbs into their grave —
The first grave yet dug for mortality.
But who hath dug that grave? Oh, earth! Oh, earth
For all the fruits thou hast render'd to me, I
Give thee back this. — Now for the wilderness.

[*ADAH stoops down and kisses the body of ABEL.*]

Adah. A dicary, and an early doom, my brother,
Has been thy lot! Of all who mourn for thee,
I alone must not weep. My office is

¹ The "four rivers" which flowed round Eden, and consequently the only waters with which Cain was acquainted upon earth.

² [The catastrophe is brought about with great dramatic skill and effect. The murderer is sorrowful and confounded, — his parents reprobate and renounce him, — his wife clings to him with eager and unhesitating affection; and they wander forth together into the vast solitude of the universe. — *JEFFREY.*]

Henceforth to dry up tears, and not to shed them ;
 But yet of all who mourn, none mourn like me,
 Not only for thyself, but him who slew thee.
 Now, Cain ! I will divide thy burden with thee.

Cain. Eastward from Eden will we take our way ;
 'T is the most desolate, and suits my steps.

Adah. Lead ! thou shalt be my guide, and may our
 God

Be thine ! Now let us carry forth our children.

Cain. And *he* who lieth there was childless. I
 Have dried the fountain of a gentle race,
 Which might have graced his recent marriage couch,
 And might have temper'd this stern blood of mine,
 Uniting with our children Abel's offspring !
 O Abel !

Adah. Peace be with him !

Cain.

But with *me* ! —

[*Exeunt.*]

¹ [The reader has seen what Sir Walter Scott's general opinion of "Cain" was, in the letter appended to the Dedication, *antè*, p. 9. Mr. Moore's was conveyed to Lord Byron in these words :—

"I have read *Foscari* and *Cain*. The former does not please me so highly as *Sardanapalus*. It has the fault of all those violent Venetian stories ; being unnatural and improbable, and therefore, in spite of all your fine management of them, appealing but remotely to one's sympathies. But *Cain* is wonderful — terrible — never to be forgotten. If I am not mistaken, it will sink deep into the world's heart ; and while many will shudder at its blasphemy, all must fall prostrate before its grandeur. Talk of *Æschylus* and his *Prometheus* ! — here is the true spirit both of the Poet — and the Devil."

Lord Byron's answer to Mr. Moore on this occasion contains the substance of all that he ever thought fit to advance in defence of the assaulted points in his "Mystery :"—

"With respect to religion," he says, "can I never convince you that *I* hold no such opinions as the characters in that drama, which seems to have frightened every body ? My ideas of a character may run away with me : like all imaginative men, I, of course, embody myself with the character, *while I draw* it, but not a moment after the pen is from off the paper."

He thus alludes to the effects of the critical tempest excited by "Cain," in the eleventh canto of "Don Juan:"—

"In twice five years the 'greatest living poet,'
Like to the champion in the listy ring,
Is call'd on to support his claim, or show it,
Although 't is an imaginary thing
Even I — albeit I'm sure I did not know it,
Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be king —
Was reckon'd, a considerable time,
The Grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.

"But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean seems *Cain*."

We shall now present the reader with a few of the most elaborate summaries of the contemporary critics, — favourable and unfavourable — beginning with the Edinburgh Review.

Mr. Jeffrey says, — "Though 'Cain' abounds in beautiful passages, and shows more *power*, perhaps, than any of the author's dramatical compositions, we regret very much that it should ever have been published. . . . Lord Byron has no priestlike cant or priestlike reviling to apprehend from us. We do not charge him with being either a disciple or an apostle of Lucifer; nor do we describe his poetry as a mere compound of blasphemy and obscenity. On the contrary, we are inclined to believe that he wishes well to the happiness of mankind, and are glad to testify that his poems abound with sentiments of great dignity and tenderness, as well as passages of infinite sublimity and beauty. . . . Philosophy and poetry are both very good things in their way; but, in our opinion, they do not go very well together. It is but a poor and pedantic sort of poetry that seeks to embody nothing but metaphysical subtleties and abstract deductions of reason — and a very suspicious philosophy that aims at establishing its doctrines by appeals to the passions and the fancy. Though such arguments, however, are worth little in the schools, it does not follow that their effect is inconsiderable in the world. On the contrary, it is the mischief of all poetical paradoxes, that, from the very limits and end of poetry, which deals only in obvious and glancing views, they are never brought to the fair test of argument. An allusion to a doubtful topic will often pass for a definitive conclusion on it; and, clothed in beautiful language, may leave the most pernicious impressions behind. We therefore think that poets ought fairly to be confined to the established creed and morality of their country, or to the *actual* passions and sentiments of mankind; and that poetical dreamers and sophists who pretend to *theorise* according to their feverish fancies, without a warrant from authority or reason, ought to be banished the commonwealth of letters. In the courts of morality, poets are unexceptionable *witnesses*: they may give in the evidence, and depose to facts whether good or ill; but we demur to their arbitrary and self-pleasing summing up; they are suspected *judges*,

and not very often safe advocates, where great questions are concerned, and universal principles brought to issue."

The Reviewer in the *Quarterly* was the late Bishop Heber. His article ends as follows:—

"We do not think, indeed, that there is much vigour or poetical propriety in any of the characters of Lord Byron's *Mystery*. Eve, on one occasion, and one only, expresses herself with energy, and not even then with any great depth of that maternal feeling which the death of her favourite son was likely to excite in her. Adam moralises without dignity. Abel is as dull as he is pious. Lucifer, though his first appearance is well conceived, is as sententious and sarcastic as a Scotch metaphysician, and the gravamina which drives Cain into impiety are circumstances which could only produce a similar effect on a weak and sluggish mind,—the necessity of exertion and the fear of death! Yet, in the happiest climate of earth, and amid the early vigour of nature, it would be absurd to describe (nor has Lord Byron so described it) the toil to which Cain can have been subject as excessive or burdensome. And he is made too happy in his love, too extravagantly fond of his wife and his child, to have much leisure for those gloomy thoughts which belong to disappointed ambition and jaded licentiousness. Nor, though there are some passages in this drama of no common power, is the general tone of its poetry so excellent as to atone for these imperfections of design. The dialogue is cold and constrained. The descriptions are like the shadows of a phantasmagoria, at once indistinct and artificial. Except Adah, there is no person in whose fortunes we are interested; and we close the book with no distinct or clinging recollection of any single passage in it, and with the general impression only that Lucifer has said much and done little, and that Cain has been unhappy without grounds and wicked without an object. But if, as a poem, Cain is little qualified to add to Lord Byron's reputation, we are unfortunately constrained to observe that its poetical defects are the very smallest of its demerits. It is not, indeed, as some both of its admirers and its enemies appear to have supposed, a direct attack on Scripture and on the authority of Moses. The expressions of Cain and Lucifer are not more offensive to the ears of piety than such discourses must necessarily be, or than Milton, without offence, has put into the mouths of beings similarly situated. And though the intention is evident which has led the Atheists and Jacobins (the terms are convertible) of our metropolis to circulate the work in a cheap form among the populace, we are not ourselves of opinion that it possesses much power of active mischief, or that many persons will be very deeply or lastingly impressed by insinuations which lead to no practical result, and difficulties which so obviously transcend the range of human experience."

It is not unamusing to compare the above with the following paragraph in one of the Bishop's private letters at the time:—

"I have been very busy since I came home in reviewing Lord Byron's dramatic poems. Of course, I have had occasion to find a reasonable quantity of fault, but I do not think that I have done him injustice. '*Pereant qui ante nos nostra dixerunt*' I should have liked to have taken up the same ground in a great degree with Jeffrey; but, as it will never do to build on another man's foundation, I have been obliged to break ground on a different side of the fortress, though not, I think, so favourable a one, and with the disadvantage of contending against a rival, who has conducted his attack with admirable taste and skill."

The following extract is from Mr. Campbell's Magazine:—

"'Cain' is altogether of a higher order than 'Sardanapalus' and the 'Two Foscari.' Lord Byron has not, indeed, fulfilled our expectations of a gigantic picture of the first murderer; for there is scarcely any passion, except the immediate agony of rage, which brings on the catastrophe; and Cain himself is little more than the subject of supernatural agency. This piece is essentially nothing but a vehicle for striking allusions to the mighty abstractions of Death and Life, Eternity and Time; for vast but dim descriptions of the regions of space, and for daring disputations on that great problem, the origin of evil. The groundwork of the arguments on the awful subjects handled is very commonplace; but they are arrayed in great majesty of language, and conducted with a frightful audacity. The direct attacks on the goodness of God are not, perhaps, taken apart, bolder than some passages of Milton; but they inspire quite a different sensation, because, in thinking of *Paradise Lost*, we never regard the Deity, or Satan, as other than great adverse powers, created by the imagination of the poet. The personal identity which Milton has given to his spiritual intelligences,—the local habitations which he has assigned them,—the material beauty with which he has invested their forms,—all these remove the idea of impurity from their discourses. But we know nothing of Lord Byron's Lucifer, except his speeches: he is invented only that he may utter them: and the whole appears an abstract discussion held for its own sake, not maintained in order to serve the dramatic consistency of the persons. He has made no attempt to imitate Milton's plastic power;—that power by which our great poet has made his Heaven and Hell, and the very regions of space, sublime realities, palpable to the imagination, and has traced the lineaments of his angelic messengers with the precision of a sculptor. The Lucifer of 'Cain' is a mere bodiless abstraction,—the shadow of a dogma; and all the scenery over which he presides is dim, vague, and seen only in faint outline. There is, no doubt, a very uncommon power displayed, even in this shadowing out of the ethereal journey of the spirit and his victim, and in the vast sketch of the world of phantasms at which they arrive: but they are utterly unlike the massive grandeurs of Milton's creation. We are far from imputing intentional iniquity to Lord

Byron for this Mystery; nor, though its language occasionally shocks, how we apprehend any danger will arise from its perusal."

So much for the professed Reviewers. We shall conclude with a passage from Sir Egerton Brydges's "Letters on the Character and Genius of Lord Byron:"—

"One of the pieces which have had the effect of throwing the most unfavourable hues, not upon the brilliancy of Lord Byron's poetry, but upon its results to society, is 'Cain.' Yet, it must be confessed, that there is no inconsiderable portion of that poem which is second only to portions of similar import in Milton,—and many of them *not second*; in a style still sweeter and more eloquent, and with equal force, grandeur, and purity of sentiment and conception; such as the most rigidly-religious mind would have read, if it had come from Milton, or any other poet whose piety was not suspected, as the effusion of something approaching to holy inspiration.

"Let us then task our candour, and inquire of ourselves, whether he who could write such passages could *mean* wrong? Let us recollect, that as the rebellious and blasphemous speeches he has put into the mouths of Lucifer and Cain are warranted by Milton's example, and the fact of Cain's transgression recorded in the Bible, the omission of the design and filling up a character who should answer all those speeches might be a mere defect in the poet's judgment. He might think that Lucifer's known character as an *Evil Spirit* precluded his arguments from the sanction of authority; and that Cain's punishment, and the denunciations which accompanied it, were a sufficient warning. I know not that any objection has been made to 'Heaven and Earth.' It has the same cast of excellence as the ~~more~~ perfect parts of 'Cain,' but, perhaps, not quite so intense in degree.

"It seems as if Lord Byron persuaded himself, with regard to his own being, that he had always within him two contrary spirits of good and evil contending for the dominion over him, and thus reconciled those extraordinary flights of intellectual elevation and purity with a submission to the pride, the ferocity, the worldly passions, the worldly enjoyments, the corporeal pastimes, the familiar humour, the vulgarisms, the rough and coarse manliness, to which he alternately surrendered himself, and which the *good-natured* public chose to consider as the sole attributes of his personal character. Much of his time, however, must have been spent in the musings by which these high poems, so compacted of the essence of thought, were produced, and, in all this large portion of his existence here, his imagination must have borne him up on its wings into ethereal regions, far above the gross and sensual enjoyments of this grovelling earth. Did he deal, as minor poets deal, in mere splendour of words, his poetry would be no proof of this; but he *never* does so:—there is always a breathing soul beneath his words,

'That o'er-informs the tenement of clay:'

it is like the fragrant vapour that rises in incense from the earth through the morning dew ; and when we listen to this lyre,

‘ Less than a God we think there cannot dwell
Within the hollow of that shell,
That sings so sweetly and so well !’

“ If Lord Byron had not had a mind with a strong spring of virtue within it, I think that he would have thrown down his pen at some of the attacks he received, and given himself up to the sensual pleasures of his rank for the remainder of his life. The finer parts of his poems were of such spiritual splendour, and so pure, though passionate, an elevation, that they ought to have redeemed any parts which were open to doubt from malevolent construction, and even have eclipsed and rendered unnoticeable many positive faults. Lord Byron’s style, like his thoughts, had every variety. it did not attempt (as is the common practice) to make poetry by the metaphorical and the figurative ; it followed his thoughts, and was a part of them. it did not fatigue itself to render clear by illustration or important by ornament, because the thought was clear or important in itself.

“ I remember, when I first read ‘ Cain,’ I thought it, as a composition, the most enchanting and irresistible of all Lord Byron’s works ; and I think so still. Some of the sentiments, taken detachedly, and left unanswered, are no doubt dangerous, and therefore ought not to have been so left ; but the class of readers whom this poem is likely to interest are of so very elevated a cast, and the effect of the poetry is to refine, spiritualise, and illumine the imagination with such a sort of unearthly sublimity, that the mind of those, I am persuaded, will become too strong to be misled by

HEAVEN AND EARTH :

A Mystery,

FOUNDED ON THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE IN GENESIS

CHAP. VI

" And it came to pass that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair ; and they took them wives of all which they chose "

BY

LORD BYRON



and woman waiting for her demon lover " — COLERIDGE.

LONDON :

IN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

SOLD ALSO BY

TILT AND BOGUE, FLEET STREET :

MURCH, OLIVER AND BOYD : DUBLIN, JOHN CUMMING.

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P R E F A C E.

IN publishing the following Tragedies ¹ I have only to repeat, that they were not composed with the most remote view to the stage. On the attempt made by the managers in a former instance, the public opinion has been already expressed. With regard to my own private feelings, as it seems that they are to stand for nothing, I shall say nothing.

For the historical foundation of the following compositions the reader is referred to the Notes.

The Author has in one instance attempted to preserve, and in the other to approach, the "unities;" conceiving that with any very distant departure from them, there may be poetry, but can be no drama. He is aware of the unpopularity of this notion in present English literature; but it is not a system of his own, being merely an opinion, which, not very long ago, was the law of literature throughout the world, and is still so in the more civilised parts of it. But "*nous avons changé tout cela*," and are reaping the advantages of the change. The writer is far from conceiving that any thing he can adduce by personal precept or example can at all approach his regular, or even irregular predecessors: he is merely giving a reason why he preferred the more regular formation of a structure, however feeble, to an entire abandonment of all rules

¹ *Sardanapalus*" originally appeared in the same volume with "*The Two Foscari*."]

whatsoever. Where he has failed, the failure is in the architect, — and not in the art. ¹

¹ ["In this preface" (says Mr. Jeffrey), "Lord Byron renews his protest against looking upon any of his plays as having been composed 'with the most remote view to the stage;' and, at the same time, testifies in behalf of the unities, as essential to the existence of the drama — according to what 'was, till lately, the law of literature throughout the world, and is still so in the more civilised parts of it.' We do not think these opinions very consistent; and we think that neither of them could possibly find favour with a person whose genius had a truly dramatic character. We should as soon expect an orator to compose a speech altogether unfit to be spoken. A drama is not merely a dialogue, but *an action*; and necessarily supposes that something is to pass before the eyes of assembled spectators. Whatever is peculiar to its written part, should derive its peculiarity from this consideration. Its style should be an accompaniment to action, and should be calculated to excite the emotions, and keep alive the attention, of gazing multitudes. If an author does not bear this continually in his mind, and does not write in the ideal presence of an eager and diversified assemblage, he may be a poet perhaps, but assuredly he will never be a dramatist. If Lord Byron really does not wish to impregnate his elaborate scenes with the living part of the drama — if he has no hankering after stage-effect — if he is not haunted with the visible presentiment of the persons he has created — if, in setting down a vehement invective, he does not fancy the tone in which Mr. Kean would deliver it, and anticipate the long applauses of the pit, then he may be sure that neither his feelings nor his genius are in unison with the stage at all. Why, then, should he affect the form, without the power of tragedy? Didactic reasoning and eloquent description will not compensate, in a play, for a dearth of dramatic spirit and invention: and, besides, sterling sense and poetry, as such, ought to stand by themselves, without the unmeaning mockery of a *dramatis personæ*. As to Lord Byron pretending to set up the unities at this time of day, as 'the law of literature throughout the world,' it is mere caprice and contradiction. He, if ever man was, is a *law to himself* — 'a chartered libertine;' — and now, when he is tired of this unbridled licence, he wants to do penance within the unities! English dramatic poetry soars above the unities, just as the imagination does. The only pretence for insisting on them is, that we suppose the stage itself to be, actually and really, the very spot on which a given action is performed; and, if so, this space cannot be removed to another. But the supposition is manifestly quite contrary to truth and experience." — *Edin. Rev.* vol. xxxvi.

The reader may be pleased to compare the above with the following passage from Dr. Johnson: —

"Whether Shakspeare knew the unities, and rejected them by

design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide and useless to inquire. We may reasonably suppose, that when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and critics; and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice which he might have begun by chance. As nothing is essential to the fable but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it much to be lamented, that they were not known by him, or not observed: nor, if such another poet could arise, should I very vehemently reproach him, that his first act passed at Venice, and his next in Cyprus. Such violations of rules merely positive become the comprehensive genius of Shakspeare, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticism of Voltaire: —

— ‘ Non usque adeo permiscuit imis
Longus summa dies, ut non, si voce Metelli
Serventur leges, malint a Cæsare tolli.’

Yet, when I speak thus slightly of dramatic rules, I cannot but recollect how much wit and learning may be produced against me; before such authorities I am afraid to stand, not that I think the present question one of those that are to be decided by mere authority, but because it is to be suspected, that these precepts have not been so easily received, but for far better reasons than I have yet been able to find. The result of my inquiries, in which it would be ludicrous to boast of impartiality, is, that the unities of time and place are not essential to a just drama; that though they may sometimes conduce to pleasure, they are always to be sacrificed to the nobler beauties of variety and instruction; and that a play written with nice observation of critical rules, is to be contemplated as an elaborate curiosity, as the product of superfluous and ostentatious art, by which is shown rather what is possible than what is necessary. He that without diminution of any other excellence shall preserve all the unities unbroken, deserves the like applause with the architect, who shall display all the orders of architecture in a citadel, without any deduction from its strength, but the principal beauty of a citadel is to exclude the enemy; and the greatest graces of a play are to copy nature and instruct life.” — *Preface to Shakspeare.*]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

SARDANAPALUS, *King of Nineveh and Assyria, &c.*

ARRACES, *the Mede who aspired to the Throne.*

BELESES, *a Chaldean and Soothsayer.*

SALEMENES, *the King's Brother-in-Law.*

ALFADA, *an Assyrian Officer of the Palace.*

FRANIA.

ZAMES.

SPEKO.

BALEA.

WOMEN.

ZARINA, *the Queen.*

MYRRHA, *an Ionian female Slave, and the Favourite of*

SARDANAPALUS.

*Women composing the Harem of SARDANAPALUS, Guards,
Attendants, Chaldean Priests, Medes, &c. &c.*

Scene — a Hall in the Royal Palace of Nineveh.

In this tragedy it has been my intention to follow the account of Diodorus Siculus; reducing it, however, to such dramatic regularity as I best could, and trying to approach the unities. I therefore suppose the rebellion to explode and succeed in one day by a sudden conspiracy, instead of the long war of the history.

SARDANAPALUS.¹

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the Palace.

Salemenes (solus). HE hath wrong'd his queen, but
 still he is her lord ;
 He hath wrong'd my sister, still he is my brother ;
 He hath wrong'd his people, still he is their sovereign,

¹ [Sardanapalus is, beyond all doubt, a work of great beauty and power ; and though the heroine has many traits in common with the Medoras and Gulnares of Lord Byron's undramatic poetry, the hero must be allowed to be a new character in his hands. He has, indeed the scorn of war, and glory, and priestcraft, and regular morality, which distinguishes the rest of his lordship's favourites ; but he has no misanthropy, and very little pride — and may be regarded, on the whole, as one of the most truly good-humoured, amiable, and respectable voluptuaries to whom we have ever been presented. In this conception of his character, the author has very wisely followed nature and fancy rather than history. *His* Sardanapalus is not an effeminate, worn-out debauchee, with shattered nerves and exhausted senses, the slave of indolence and vicious habits ; but a sanguine votary of pleasure, a princely epicure, indulging, revelling in boundless luxury while he can, but with a soul so inured to voluptuousness, so saturated with delights, that pain and danger, when they come uncalled for, give him neither concern nor dread ; and he goes forth from the banquet to the battle, as to a dance or measure, attired by the Graces, and with youth, joy, and love for his guides. He dallies with Bellara as her bridegroom — for his sport and pastime ; and the spear or fan, the shield or shining mirror, become his hands equally well. He enjoys life, in short, and triumphs in death ;

And I must be his friend as well as subject
 He must not perish thus. I will not see
 The blood of Nimrod and Semiramis
 Sink in the earth, and thirteen hundred years
 Of empire ending like a shepherd's tale;
 He must be roused. In his effeminate heart
 There is a careless courage which corruption
 Has not all quench'd, and latent energies,
 Repress'd by circumstance, but not destroy'd —
 Steep'd, but not drown'd, in deep voluptuousness.
 If born a peasant, he had been a man
 To have reach'd an empire: to an empire born,
 He will bequeath none; nothing but a name,
 Which his sons will not prize in heritage: —
 Yet, not all lost, even yet he may redeem
 His sloth and shame, by only being that
 Which he should be, as easily as the thing
 He should not be and is. Were it less toil
 To sway his nations than consume his life?

and whether in prosperous or adverse circumstances, his soul smiles out superior to evil. — JEFFREY.

The Sardanapalus of Lord Byron is pretty nearly such a person as the Sardanapalus of history may be supposed to have been. Young, thoughtless, spoiled by flattery and unbounded self-indulgence, but with a temper naturally amiable, and abilities of a superior order, he affects to undervalue the sanguinary renown of his ancestors as an excuse for inattention to the most necessary duties of his rank; and flatters himself, while he is indulging his own sloth, that he is making his people happy. Yet, even in his fondness for pleasure, there lurks a love of contradiction. Of the whole picture, selfishness is the prevailing feature — selfishness admirably drawn indeed; apologised for by every palliating circumstance of education and habit, and clothed in the brightest colours of which it is susceptible from youth, talents, and placability. But it is selfishness still; and we should have been tempted to quarrel with the art which made vice and frivolity thus amiable, if Lord Byron had not at the same time pointed out with much skill the bitterness and weariness of spirit which inevitably wait on such a character; and if he had not given a fine contrast to the picture in the accompanying portraits of Salmenes and of Myrrha. — BISHOP HEBER.]

To head an army than to rule a harem?
He sweats in palling pleasures, dulls his soul,¹
And saps his goodly strength, in toils which yield not
Health like the chase, nor glory like the war —
He must be roused. Alas! there is no sound

[*Sound of soft music heard from within*

To rouse him short of thunder. Hark! the lute,
The lyre, the timbrel; the lascivious tinklings
Of lulling instruments, the softening voices
Of women, and of beings less than women,
Must chime in to the echo of his revel,
While the great king of all we know of earth
Lolls crown'd with roses, and his diadem
Lies negligently by to be caught up
By the first manly hand which dares to snatch it.
Lo, where they come! already I perceive
The reeking odours of the perfumed trains,
And see the bright gems of the glittering girls,²
At once his chorus and his council, flash
Along the gallery, and amidst the damsels,
As femininely garb'd, and scarce less female,
The grandson of Seniramis, the man-queen. —
He comes! Shall I await him? yes, and front him,
And tell him what all good men tell each other,
Speaking of him and his. They come, the slaves
Led by the monarch subject to his slaves.³

¹ ["He sweats in dreary, dulled effeminacy." — MS.]

² ["And see the gewgaws of the glittering girls." — MS.]

³ [Salemenes is the direct opposite to selfishness; and the character, though slightly sketched, displays little less ability than that of Sardanapalus. He is a stern, loyal, plain-spoken soldier and subject; clear-sighted, just and honourable in his ultimate views, though not more punctilious about the means of obtaining them than might be expected from a respectable satrap of ancient Niveh, or a respectable vizier of the modern Turkish empire. To his king, in spite of personal neglect and family injuries, he is, throughout, pertinaciously attached and punctiliously faithful. To the king's rebels he is inclined to be severe, bloody, and even treacherous; an imperfection, however, in his character, to want

SCENE II.

Enter SARDANAPALUS effeminately dressed, his Head crowned with Flowers, and his Robe negligently flowing, attended by a Train of Women and young Slaves.

Sar. (speaking to some of his attendants). Let the pavilion over the Euphrates
Be garlanded, and lit, and furnish'd forth
For an especial banquet; at the hour
Of midnight we will sup there: see nought wanting,
And bid the galley be prepared. There is
A cooling breeze which crisps the broad clear river:
We will embark anon. Fair nymphs, who deign
To share the soft hours of Sardanapalus,
We'll meet again in that the sweetest hour,
When we shall gather like the stars above us,
And you will form a heaven as bright as theirs;
Till then, let each be mistress of her time,
And thou, my own Ionian Myrrha,¹ choose
Wilt thou along with them or me?

Myr.

My lord —

which would, in his situation, be almost unnatural, and which is skilfully introduced as a contrast to the instinctive perception of virtue and honour which flashes out from the indolence of his master. Of the satrap, however, the faults as well as the virtues are alike the offspring of disinterested loyalty and patriotism. It is for his country and king that he is patient of injury; for them he is valiant; for them cruel. He has no ambition of personal power, no thirst of individual fame. In battle and in victory, "Assyria!" is his only war-cry. When he sends off the queen and princes, he is less anxious for his nephews and sister than for the preservation of the line of Nimrod; and, in his last moments, it is the supposed flight of his sovereign which alone distresses and overcomes him. — HEBER.]

¹ "The Ionian name had been still more comprehensive, having included the Achæans and the Bœotians, who, together with those to whom it was afterwards confined, would make nearly the whole of the Greek nation; and among the orientals it was always the general name for the Greeks." — MITFORD'S *Greece*, vol. i. p. 199.

Sar. My lord, my life! why answerest thou so coldly?

It is the curse of kings to be so answer'd.

Rule thy own hours, thou rulest mine — say, wouldst thou

Accompany our guests, or charm away

The moments from me?

Myr. The king's choice is mine.¹

Sar. I pray thee say not so: my chiefest joy

Is to contribute to thine every wish.

I do not dare to breathe my own desire,

Lest it should clash with thine; for thou art still

Too prompt to sacrifice thy thoughts for others.²

Myr. I would remain: I have no happiness

Save in beholding thine; yet —

¹ [The chief charm and vivifying angel of the piece is Myrrha, the Greek slave of Sardanapalus — a beautiful, heroic, devoted, and ethereal being — in love with the generous and infatuated monarch — ashamed of loving a barbarian — and using all her influence over him to ennoble as well as to adorn his existence, and to arm him against the terrors of his close. Her voluptuousness is that of the heart — her heroism of the affections. If the part she takes in the dialogue be sometimes too subdued and submissive for the lofty daring of her character, it is still such as might become a Greek slave — a lovely Ionian girl, in whom the love of liberty and the scorn of death were tempered by the consciousness of what she regarded as a degrading passion, and an inward sense of fitness and decorum with reference to her condition. — JEFFREY.]

² [Myrrha is a female Salemenes, in whom, with admirable skill, attachment to the individual Sardanapalus is substituted for the gallant soldier's loyalty to the descendant of kings; and whose energy of expostulation, no less than the natural high tone of her talents, her courage, and her Grecian pride, is softened into a subdued and winning tenderness by the constant and painful recollection of her abasement as a slave in the royal harem; and still more by the lowliness of perfect womanly love in the presence of and towards the object of her passion. No character can be drawn more natural than hers; few ever have been drawn more touching and amiable. Of course she is not, nor could be, a Jewish or a Christian heroine; but she is a model of Grecian piety and nobility of spirit, and she is one whom a purer faith would have raised to the level of a Rebecca or a Miriam. — HEBER.]

Sar. Yet! what YET?
Thy own sweet will shall be the only barrier
Which ever rises betwixt thee and me.

Myr. I think the present is the wonted hour
Of council; it were better I retire.

Sal. (*comes forward and says*) The Ionian slave says
well: let her retire.

Sar. Who answers? How now, brother?

Sal. The queen's brother,
And your most faithful vassal, royal lord.

Sar. (*addressing his train*). As I have said, let all
dispose their hours
Till midnight, when again we pray your presence.

[*The court retiring.*]
To MYRRHA¹ (*who is going*). Myrrha! I thought thou
wouldst remain.

Myr. Great king,
Thou didst not say so.

Sar. But thou lookedst it:
I know each glance of those Ionic eyes,²
Which said thou wouldst not leave me.

Myr. Sire! your brother —

Sal. His consort's brother, minion of Ionia!
How darest thou name me and not blush?

Sar. Not blush!
Thou hast no more eyes than heart to make her
crimson

Like to the dying day on Caucasus,
Where sunset tints the snow with rosy shadows,
And then reproach her with thine own cold blindness,
Which will not see it. What! in tears, my Myrrha?

Sal. Let them flow on; she weeps for more than one,
And is herself the cause of bitterer tears.

¹ [In the original draught, "*Byblis*." — E.]

² ["I know each glance of those deep Greek-soul'd eyes." — MS.]

Sar. Cursed be he who caused those tears to flow !

Sal. Curse not thyself — millions do that already.

Sar. 'Thou dost forget thee: make me not remember
I am a monarch.

Sal. Would thou couldst !

Myr. My sovereign,
I pray, and thou, too, prince, permit my absence.

Sar. Since it must be so, and this churl has check'd
Thy gentle spirit, go ; but recollect
That we must forthwith meet : I had rather lose
An empire than thy presence. [Exit MYRRHA.

Sal. It may be,
Thou wilt lose both, and both for ever !

Sar. Brother !
I can at least command myself, who listen
To language such as this : yet urge me not
Beyond my easy nature.

Sal. 'Tis beyond
That easy, far too easy, idle nature,
Which I would urge thee. O that I could rouse thee !
Though 't were against myself.

Sar. By the god Baal !
The man would make me tyrant.

Sal. So thou art,
Think'st thou there is no tyranny but that
Of blood and chains ? The despotism of vice —
The weakness and the wickedness of luxury —
The negligence — the apathy — the evils
Of sensual sloth — produce ten thousand tyrants,
Whose delegated cruelty surpasses
The worst acts of one energetic master,
However harsh and hard in his own bearing.
The false and fond examples of thy lusts
Corrupt no less than they oppress, and sap
In the same moment all thy pageant power
And those who should sustain it ; so that whether

A foreign foe invade, or civil broil
 Distract within, both will alike prove fatal :
 The first thy subjects have no heart to conquer ;
 The last they rather would assist than vanquish.

Sar. Why, what makes thee the mouth-piece of the people ?

Sal. Forgiveness of the queen, my sister's wrongs ;
 A natural love unto my infant nephews ;
 Faith to the king, a faith he may need shortly,
 In more than words ; respect for Nimrod's line
 Also, another thing thou knowest not.

Sar. What's that ?

Sal. To thee an unknown word.

Sar. Yet speak it ;

■ I love to learn.

Sal. Virtue.

Sar. Not know the word¹

Never was word yet wrung so in my ears —
 Worse than the rabble's shout, or splitting trumpet :
 I've heard thy sister talk of nothing else.

Sal. To change the irksome theme, then, hear of vice.

Sar. From whom ?

Sal. Even from the winds, if thou couldst listen
 Unto the echoes of the nation's voice.

Sar. Come, I'm indulgent, as thou knowest, patient,
 As thou hast often proved — speak out, what moves
 thee ?

Sal. Thy peril.

Sar. Say on.

Sal. Thus, then : all the nations
 For they are many, whom thy father left
 In heritage, are loud in wrath against thee.

Sar. 'Gainst me ! What would the slaves ?

Sal.

A king.

Sar.
 Am I then ?

And what

Sal. In their eyes a nothing ; but
In mine a man who might be something still. [have ?

Sar. The railing drunkards ! why, what would they
Have they not peace and plenty ?

Sal. Of the first
More than is glorious ; of the last, far less
Than the king recks of.

Sar. Whose then is the crime,
But the false satraps, who provide no better ?

Sal. And somewhat in the monarch who ne'er looks
Beyond his palace walls, or if he stirs
Beyond them, 't is but to some mountain palace,
Till summer heats wear down. O glorious Baal !
Who built up this vast empire, and wert made
A god or at the least shimest like a god
Through the long centuries of thy renown,
This, thy presumed descendant, ne'er beheld
As king the kingdoms thou didst leave as hero,
Won with thy blood, and toil, and time, and peril !
For what ? to furnish imposts for a revel,
Or multiplied extortions for a minion.

Sar. I understand thee — thou wouldst have me go
Forth as a conqueror. By all the stars
Which the Chaldeans read — the restless slaves ¹
Deserve that I should curse them with their wishes,
And lead them forth to glory.

Sal. Wherefore not ?
Semiramis — a woman only — led
These our Assyrians to the solar shores
Of Ganges.

Sar. 'T is most true. And *how* return'd ?

Sal. Why, like a *man* — a hero ; baffled, but
Not vanquish'd. With but twenty guards, she made
Good her retreat to Bactria.

¹ [—— " I have a mind
To curse the restless slaves with their own wishes." — MS.]

Sar. And how many
Left she behind in India to the vultures?

Sal. Our annals say not.

Sar. Then I will say for them —
That she had better woven within her palace
Some twenty garments, than with twenty guards
Hast fled to Bactria, leaving to the ravens,
And wolves, and men — the fiercer of the three,
Her myriads of fond subjects. Is *this* glory?
Then let me live in ignominy ever.

Sal. All warlike spirits have not the same fate.
Semiramis, the glorious parent of
A hundred kings, although she fail'd in India,
Brought Persia, Media, Bactria, to the realm
• Which she once sway'd — and thou *might'st* sway.

Sar. I *sway* them —
She but subdued them.

Sal. It may be ere long
That they will need her sword more than your sceptre.

Sar. There was a certain Bacchus, was there not?
I've heard my Greek girls speak of such — they say
He was a god, that is, a Grecian god,
An idol foreign to Assyria's worship,
Who conquer'd this same golden realm of Ind
Thou prat'st of, where Semiramis was vanquish'd.

Sal. I have heard of such a man; and thou perceiv'st
That he is deem'd a god for what he did.

Sar. And in his godship I will honour him —
Not much as man. What, ho! my cupbearer!

Sal. What means the king?

Sar. To worship your new god
And ancient conqueror. Some wine, I say.

Enter Cupbearer.

Sar. (*addressing the Cupbearer*). Bring me the golden
goblet thick with gems,

Which bears the name of Nimrod's chalice. Hence,
Fill full, and bear it quickly. [*Exit Cupbearer.*]

Sal. Is this inoment
A fitting one for the resumption of
The yet unslept-off revels?

Re-enter Cupbearer, with wine.

Sar. (*taking the cup from him*). Noble kinsman,
If these barbarian Greeks of the far shores
And skirts of these our realms lie not, this Bacchus
Conquer'd the whole of India, did he not?

Sal. He did, and thence was deem'd a deity.¹

Sar. Not so : — of all his conquests a few columns,
Which may be his, and might be mine, if I
Thought them worth purchase and conveyance, are
The landmarks of the seas of gore he shed,
The realms he wasted, and the hearts he broke.
But here, here in this goblet is his title
'To immortality — the immortal grape
From which he first express'd the soul, and gave
'To gladden that of man, as some atonement
For the victorious mischiefs he had done.
Had it not been for this, he would have been
A mortal still in name as in his grave ;
And, like my ancestor Semiramis,
A sort of semi-glorious human monster.
'Here's that which deified him — let it now
Humanise thee ; my surly, chiding brother,
Pledge me to the Greek god !

Sal. For all thy realms
I would not so blaspheme our country's creed.

Sar. That is to say, thou thinkest him a hero,
That he shed blood by oceans ; and no god,
Because he turn'd a fruit to an enchantment,
Which cheers the sad, revives the old, inspires

¹ [“ He did, and thence was deem'd a god in story.” — MS.]

The young, makes weariness forget his toil,
And fear her danger ; opens a new world
When this, the present, palls. Well, then *I* pledge thee
And *him* as a true man, who did his utmost
In good or evil to surprise mankind. [*Drinks.*]

Sal. Wilt thou resume a revel at this hour?

Sar. And if I did, 't were better than a trophy,
Being bought without a tear. But that is not
My present purpose : since thou wilt not pledge me,
Continue what thou pleasest.

(*To the Cupbearer.*)

Boy, retire.

[*Exit Cupbearer.*]

Sal. I would but have recall'd thee from thy dream ;
Better by me awaken'd than rebellion.

Sar. Who should rebel ? or why ? what cause ? pretext ?
I am the lawful king, descended from
A race of kings who knew no predecessors.
What have I done to thee, or to the people,
That thou shouldst rail, or they rise up against me ?

Sal. Of what thou hast done to me, I speak not.

Sar. But
Thou think'st that I have wrong'd the queen : is't not

Sal. Think ! Thou hast wrong'd her !¹ [so ?]

Sar. Patience, prince, and hear me.
She has all power and splendour of her station,
Respect, the tutelage of Assyria's heirs,
The homage and the appanage of sovereignty.
I married her as monarchs wed — for state,
And loved her as most husbands love their wives.
If she or thou supposedst I could link me
Like a Chaldean peasant to his mate,
Ye knew nor me, nor monarchs, nor mankind.

¹ [In many parts of this play, it strikes me that Lord Byron has more in his eye the case of a sinful Christian that has but one wife, and a sly business or so which she and her kin do not approve of, than a bearded Oriental, like Sardanapalus, with three hundred wives and seven hundred concubines. — Hogg.]

Sal. I pray thee, change the theme : my blood
disdains

Complaint, and Salemenes' sister seeks not
Reluctant love even from Assyria's lord !
Nor would she deign to accept divided passion
With foreign strumpets and Ionian slaves.
The queen is silent.

Sar And why not her brother ?

Sal. I only echo thee the voice of empires,
Which he who long neglects not long will govern.

Sar. The ungrateful and ungracious slaves ! they
murmur

Because I have not shed their blood, nor led them
To dry into the desert's dust by myriads,
Or whiten with their bones the banks of Ganges ;
Nor decimated them with savage laws,
Nor sweated them to build up pyramids,
Or Babylonian walls.

Sal. Yet these are trophies
More worthy of a people and their prince
Than songs, and lutes, and feasts, and concubines,
And lavish'd treasures, and contemned virtues.

Sar. Or for my trophies I have founded cities :
There 's Tarsus and Anchialus, both built
In one day — what could that blood-loving beldame,
My martial grandam, chaste Semiramis,
Do more, except destroy them ?

Sal. 'T is most true ;
I own thy merit in those founded cities,
Built for a whim, recorded with a verse,
Which shames both them and thee to coming ages.

Sar. Shame me ! By Baal, the cities, though well
built,
Are not more goodly than the verse ! Say what
Thou wilt against me, my mode of life or rule,
But nothing 'gainst the truth of that brief record.

Why, those few lines contain the history
 Of all things human : hear — “ Sardanapalus,
 The king, and son of Anacyndaraxes,
 In one day built Anchialus and Tarsus.
 Eat, drink, and love ; the rest’s not worth a fillip.’¹

Cal. A worthy moral, and a wise inscription,
 For a king to put up before his subjects !

¹ “ For this expedition he took only a small chosen body of the phalanx, but all his light troops. In the first day’s march he reached Anchialus, a town said to have been founded by the king of Assyria, Sardanapalus. The fortifications, in their magnitude and extent, still in Arrian’s time, bore the character of greatness, which the Assyrians appear singularly to have affected in works of the kind. A monument representing Sardanapalus was found there, warranted by an inscription in Assyrian characters, of course in the old Assyrian language, which the Greeks, whether well or ill, interpreted thus: ‘ Sardanapalus, son of Anacyndaraxes, in one day founded Anchialus and Tarsus. Eat, drink, play ; all other human joys are not worth a fillip.’ Supposing this version nearly exact (for Arrian says it was not quite so), whether the purpose has not been to invite to civil order a people disposed to turbulence, rather than to recommend immoderate luxury, may perhaps reasonably be questioned. What, indeed, could be the object of a king of Assyria in founding such towns in a country so distant from his capital, and so divided from it by an immense extent of sandy deserts and lofty mountains, and, still more, how the inhabitants could be at once in circumstances to abandon themselves to the intemperate joys which their prince has been supposed to have recommended, is not obvious : but it may deserve observation that, in that line of coast, the southern of Lesser Asia, ruins of cities, evidently of an age after Alexander, yet barely named in history, at this day astonish the adventurous traveller by their magnificence and elegance. Amid the desolation which, under a singularly barbarian government, has for so many centuries been daily spreading in the finest countries of the globe, whether more from soil and climate, or from opportunities for commerce, extraordinary means must have been found for communities to flourish there ; whence it may seem that the measures of Sardanapalus were directed by juster views than have been commonly ascribed to him : but that monarch having been the last of a dynasty ended by a revolution, obloquy on his memory would follow of course from the policy of his successors and their partisans. The inconsistency of traditions concerning Sardanapalus is striking in Diodorus’s account of him. — *Mirror’s Greece*, vol. ix. p. 311.

Sar. Oh, thou wouldst have me doubtless set up edicts —

“ Obey the king — contribute to his treasure —
Recruit his phalanx — spill your blood at bidding —
Fall down and worship, or get up and toil.”

Or thus — “ Sardanapalius on this spot

Slew fifty thousand of his enemies.

These are their sepulchres, and this his trophy.”

I leave such things to conquerors ; enough

For me, if I can make my subjects feel

The weight of human misery less, and glide

Ungroaning to the tomb. I take no license

Which I deny to them. We all are men.

Sal. Thy sires have been revered as gods —

Sar. In dust

And death, where they are neither gods nor men.

Talk not of such to me ! the worms are gods ;

At least they banqueted upon your gods,

And died for lack of farther nutriment.

Those gods were merely men ; look to their issue —

I feel a thousand mortal things about me,

But nothing godlike, — unless it may be

The thing which you condemn, a disposition

To love and to be merciful, to pardon

The follies of my species, and (that 's human)

To be indulgent to my own.

Sal. Alas !

The doom of Nineveh is seal'd. — Woe — woe

To the unrivall'd city !

Sar. What dost dread !

Sal. Thou art guarded by thy foes : in a few hours

The tempest may break out which overwhelms thee,

And thine and mine ; and in another day

What *is* shall be the past of Belus' race.

Sar. What must we dread ?

Sal. Ambitious treachery,

Which has environ'd thee with snares ; but yet
There is resource : empower me with thy signet
To quell the machinations, and I lay
The heads of thy chief foes before thy feet.

Sar. The heads — how many ?

Sal. Must I stay to number
When even thine own's in peril ? Let me go ;
Give me thy signet — trust me with the rest.

Sar. I will trust no man with unlimited lives.
When we take those from others, we nor know
What we have taken, nor the thing we give.

Sal. Wouldst thou not take their lives who seek
for thine ?

Sar. That's a hard question — But I answer, Yes.
Cannot the thing be done without ? Who are they
Whom thou suspectest ? — Let them be arrested.

Sal. I would thou wouldst not ask me ; the next
moment

Will send my answer through thy babbling troop
Of paramours, and thence fly o'er the palace,
Even to the city, and so baffle all.—
Trust me.

Sar. Thou knowest I have done so ever ;
Take thou the signet. [*Gives the signet.*]

Sal. I have one more request —

Sar. Name it.

Sal. That thou this night forbear the banquet
In the pavilion over the Euphrates.

Sar. Forbear the banquet ! Not for all the plotters
That ever shook a kingdom ! Let them come,
And do their worst : I shall not blench for them ;
Nor rise the sooner ; nor forbear the goblet ;
Nor crown me with a single rose the less ;
Nor lose one joyous hour. — I fear them not.

Sal. But thou wouldst arm thee, wouldst thou not,
if needful ?

Sar. Perhaps. I have the goodliest armour, and
A sword of such a temper ; and a bow
And javelin, which might furnish Nimrod forth :
A little heavy, but yet not unwieldy.
And now I think on't, 't is long since I've used them,
Even in the chase. Hast ever seen them, brother ?

Sal. Is this a time for such fantastic trifling ?
If need be, wilt thou wear them ?

Sar. Will I not ?
Oh ! if it must be so, and these rash slaves
Will not be ruled with less, I'll use the sword
'Till they shall wish it turn'd into a distaff.

Sal. They say thy sceptre's turn'd to that already.

Sar. That's false ! but let them say so the old Greeks,
Of whom our captives often sing, related
The same of their chief hero, Hercules,
Because he loved a Lydian queen : thou seest
The populace of all the nations seize
Each calumny they can to sink their sovereigns.

Sal. They did not speak thus of thy fathers.

Sar. No ;
They dared not. They were kept to toil and combat,
And never changed their chains but for their armour.
Now they have peace and pastime, and the license
To revel and to rail ; it irks me not.
I would not give the smile of one fair girl
For all the popular breath that e'er divided
A name from nothing. What are the rank tongues
Of this vile herd, grown insolent with feeding,
'That I should prize their noisy praise, or dread
Their noisome clamour ?

Sal. You have said they are men ;
As such their hearts are something.

Sar. So my dogs' are ;¹

¹ [See MISCELLANIES, Vol II, " Inscription on the Monument
of a Newfoundland Dog "]

And better, as more faithful — but, proceed ;
Thou hast my signet : — since they are tumultuous,
Let them be temper'd, yet not roughly, till
Necessity enforce it. I hate all pain,
Given or received ; we have enough within us,
The meanest vassal as the loftiest monarch,
Not to add to each other's natural burthen
Of mortal misery, but rather lessen,
By mild reciprocal alleviation,
The fatal penalties imposed on life
But this they know not, or they will not know.
I have, by Baal ! done all I could to soothe them :
I made no wars, I added no new imposts,
I interfered not with their civic lives,
I let them pass their days as best might suit them,
Passing my own as suited me.

Sal. Thou stopp'st
Short of the duties of a king ; and therefore
They say thou art unfit to be a monarch.

Sur. They lie. — Unhappily, I am unfit
To be aught save a monarch ; else for me
The meanest Mede might be the king instead.

Sal. There is one Mede, at least, who seeks to
be so.

Sur. What mean'st thou ! — 't is thy secret ; thou
desirest

“ Few questions, and I'm not of curious nature.
Take the fit steps ; and, since necessity
Requires, I sanction and support thee. Ne'er
Was man who more desired to rule in peace
The peaceful only : if they rouse me, better
They had conjured up stern Nimrod from his ashes,
“ The mighty hunter.” I will turn these realms
To one wide desert chase of brutes, who were,
But would no more, by their own choice, be human.
What they have found me, they belie ; that which

They yet may find me — shall defy their wish
To speak it worse ; and let them thank themselves.

Sal. Then thou at last canst feel ?

Sur. Feel ! who feels not
Ingratitude ?

Sal. I will not pause to answer
With words, but deeds. Keep thou awake that energy
Which sleeps at times, but is not dead within thee,
And thou may'st yet be glorious in thy reign,
As powerful in thy realm. Farewell !

[*Exit SALEMENES.*

Sur. (solus). Farewell !

He's gone ; and on his finger bears my signet,
Which is to him a sceptre — He is stern
As I am heedless ; and the slaves deserve
To feel a master. What may be the danger,
I know not : he hath found it, let him quell it.
Must I consume my life — this little life —
In guarding against all may make it less ?¹
It is not worth so much ! It were to die
Before my hour, to live in dread of death,
Tracing revolt, suspecting all about me,
Because they are near ; and all who are remote,
Because they are far. But if it should be so —
If they should sweep me off from earth and empire,
Why, what is earth or empire of the earth ?
I have loved, and lived, and multiplied my image ;
To die is no less natural than those
Acts of this clay ! 'T is true I have not shed
Blood as I might have done, in oceans, till
My name became the synonyme of death —

¹ [The epicurean philosophy of Sardanapalus gives him a fine opportunity, in his conferences with his stern and confidential adviser, Salemenes, to contrast his own imputed and fatal vices of ease and love of pleasure with the boasted virtues of his predecessors, war and conquest. — JEFFREY.]

A terror and a trophy. But for this
 I feel no penitence ; my life is love :
 If I must shed blood, it shall be by force.
 Till now, no drop from an Assyrian vein
 Hath flow'd for me, nor hath the smallest coin
 Of Nineveh's vast treasures e'er been lavish'd
 On objects which could cost her sons a tear :
 If then they hate me, 't is because I hate not :
 If they rebel, 't is because I oppress not.
 Oh, men ! ye must be ruled with scythes, not sceptres,
 And mow'd down like the grass, else all we reap
 Is rank abundance, and a rotten harvest
 Of discontents infecting the fair soil,
 Making a desert of fertility. —
 I'll think no more. — Within there, ho !

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Sar. Slave, tell
 The Ionian Myrrha we would crave her presence.
Attend. King, she is here.

MYRRHA enters.

Sar. (*apart to Attendant*). Away !
 (*Addressing MYRRHA.*) Beautiful being !
 Thou dost almost anticipate my heart ;
 It throb'd for thee, and here thou comest : let me
 Deem that some unknown influence, some sweet
 oracle,
 Communicates between us, though unseen,
 In absence, and attracts us to each other.

Myr. There doth.

Sar. I know there doth, but not its name :
 What is it ?

Myr. In my native land a God,
 And in my heart a feeling like a God's,
 Exalted ; yet I own 't is only mortal ;

For what I feel is humble, and yet happy —
That is, it would be happy ; but ——

Sar.

[MYRRHA *pauses*.
There comes

For ever something between us and what
We deem our happiness . let me remove
The barrier which that hesitating accent
Proclaims to thine, and mine is seal'd.

Myr.

My lord ! —

Sar. My lord — my king — sire — sovereign ; thus
it is —

For ever thus, address'd with awe. I ne'er
Can see a smile, unless in some broad banquet's
Intoxicating glare, when the buffoons
Have gorged themselves up to equality,
Or I have quaff'd me down to their abasement.
Myrrha, I can hear all these things, these names,
Lord — king — sire — monarch — nay, time was I
prized them ;

That is, I suffer'd them — from slaves and nobles ;
But when they falter from the lips I love,
The lips which have been press'd to mine, a chill
Comes o'er my heart, a cold sense of the falsehood
Of this my station, which represses feeling
In those for whom I have felt most, and makes me
Wish that I could lay down the dull tiara,
And share a cottage on the Caucasus
With thee, and wear no crowns but those of flowers.

Myr. Would that we could !

Sar. And dost *thou* feel this ? — Why ?

Myr. Then thou wouldst know what thou canst
never know.

Sar. And that is ——

Myr. The true value of a heart ;
At least, a woman's.

Sar. I have proved a thousand —
A thousand, and a thousand.

Myr. Hearts?

Sar. I think so.

Myr. Not one! the time may come thou may'st.

Sar. It will.

Hear Myrrha; Salemenes has declared —
Or why or how he hath divined it, Belus,
Who founded our great realm, knows more than I —
But Salemenes hath declared my throne
In peril.

Myr. He did well.

Sar. And say'st thou so?

Thou whom he spurn'd so harshly, and now dared¹
Drive from our presence with his savage jeers,
And made thee weep and blush?

Myr. I should do both
More frequently, and he did well to call me
Back to my duty. But thou spakest of peril —
Peril to thee —

Sar. Ay, from dark plots and snares
From Medes — and discontented troops and nations.
I know not what — a labyrinth of things —
A maze of mutter'd threats and mysteries:
Thou know'st the man — it is his usual custom.
But he is honest. Come, we'll think no more on't —
But of the midnight festival.

Myr. 'T is time
To think of aught save festivals. Thou hast not
Spurn'd his sage cautions?

Sar. What? — and dost thou fear.
Myr. Fear! — I'm a Greek, and how should I fear
death?

A slave, and wherefore should I dread my freedom?

¹ [———“and even dared
Profane our presence with his savage jeers.”— MS.]

Sar. Then wherefore dost thou turn so pale?

Myr. I love.

Sar. And do not I? I love thee far — far more
Than either the brief life or the wide realm,
Which, it may be, are menaced; — yet I blench not.

Myr. That means thou lovest nor thyself nor me;
For he who loves another loves himself,
Even for that other's sake. This is too rash:
Kingdoms and lives are not to be so lost. [dared]

Sar. Lost! — why, who is the aspiring chief who
Assume to win them?

Myr. Who is he should dread
To try so much? When he who is their ruler
Forgets himself, will they remember him?

Sar. Myrrha!

Myr. Frown not upon me: you have smiled
Too often on me not to make those frowns
Bitterer to bear than any punishment
Which they may augur — King, I am your subject!
Master, I am your slave! Man, I have loved you! —
Loved you, I know not by what fatal weakness,
Although a Greek, and born a foe to monarchs —
A slave, and hating fetters — an Ionian,
And, therefore, when I love a stranger, more
Degraded by that passion than by chains!
Still I have loved you. If that love were strong
Enough to overcome all former nature,
Shall it not claim the privilege to save you?

Sar. Save me, my beauty! Thou art very fair,
And what I seek of thee is love — not safety.

Myr. And without love where dwells security?

Sar. I speak of woman's love.

Myr. The very first
Of human life must spring from woman's breast,
Your first small words are taught you from her lips,
Your first tears quench'd by her, and your last sighs

Too often breathed out in a woman's hearing,
When men have shrunk from the ignoble care
Of watching the last hour of him who led them.

Sar. My eloquent Ionian ! thou speak'st music ;
The very chorus of the tragic song ¹

I have heard thee talk of as the favourite pastime
Of thy far father-land. Nay, weep not — calm thee.

Myr. I weep not. — But I pray thee, do not speak
About my fathers or their land.

Sar.

Yet oft

Thou speakest of them.

Myr. True — true : constant thought
Will overflow in words unconsciously ;
But when another speaks of Greece, it wounds me.

Sar. Well, then, how wouldst thou *save* me, as thou
saidst ?

Myr. By teaching thee to save thyself, and not
Thyself alone, but these vast realms, from all
The rage of the worst war — the war of brethren.

Sar. Why, child, I loathe all war, and warriors ;
I live in peace and pleasure : what can man
Do more ?

Myr. Alas ! my lord, with common men
There needs too oft the show of war to keep
The substance of sweet peace ; and, for a king,
'T is sometimes better to be fear'd than loved.

Sar. And I have never sought but for the last.

Myr. And now art neither.

Sar.

Dost *thou* say so, Myrrha ?

Myr. I speak of civic popular love, *self-love*,
Which means that men are kept in awe and law,

¹ [To speak of "the tragic song" as the favourite pastime of Greece, two hundred years before Thespis, is an anachronism. Nor could Myrrha, at so early a period of her country's history, have spoken of their national hatred of kings, or of that which was equally the growth of a later age, — their contempt for "barbarians." — HEBER.]

Yet not oppress'd — at least they must not think so ;
 Or if they think so, deem it necessary,
 To ward off worse oppression, their own passions.
 A king of feasts, and flowers, and wine, and revel,
 And love, and mirth, was never king of glory.

Sar. Glory ! what 's that ?

Myr. Ask of the gods thy fathers.

Sar. They cannot answer ; when the priests speak
 for them,

'T is for some small addition to the temple.

Myr. Look to the annals of thine empire's founders.

Sar. They are so blotted o'er with blood, I cannot.
 But what wouldst have ? the empire *has been* founded.
 I cannot go on multiplying empires.

Myr. Preserve thine own.

Sar. At least, I will enjoy it.

Come, Myrrha, let us go on to the Euphrates
 The hour invites, the galley is prepared,
 And the pavilion, deck'd for our return,
 In fit adornment for the evening banquet,
 Shall blaze with beauty and with light, until
 It seems unto the stars which are above us
 Itself an opposite star ; and we will sit
 Crown'd with fresh flowers like —

Myr. Victims.

Sar. No, like sovereigns,
 The shepherd king of patriarchal times,
 Who knew no brighter gems than summer wreaths,
 And none but tearless triumphs. Let us on.

Enter PANIA.

Pan. May the king live for ever !

Sar. Not an hour
 Longer than he can love. How my soul bates
 This language, which makes life itself a lie,

[“ Who loved no gems so well as those of nature.” — MS.]

Flattering dust with eternity. ¹ Well, Pania !
Be brief.

Pan. I am charged by Salemenes to
Reiterate his prayer unto the king,
That for this day, at least, he will not quit
The palace : when the general returns,
He will adduce such reasons as will warrant
His daring, and perhaps obtain the pardon
Of his presumption.

Sar. What ! am I then coop'd ?
Already captive ? can I not even breathe
The breath of heaven ? Tell prince Salemenes,
Were all Assyria raging round the walls
In mutinous myriads, I would still go forth.

Pan. I must obey, and yet ———

Myr. Oh, monarch, listen. —
How many a day and moon thou hast reclined
Within these palace walls in silken dalliance,
And never shown thee to thy people's longing ;
Leaving thy subjects' eyes ungratified,
The satraps uncontroll'd, the gods unworshipp'd,
And all things in the anarchy of sloth,
Till all, save evil, slumber'd through the realm !
And wilt thou not now tarry for a day, —
A day which may redeem thee ? Wilt thou not
Yield to the few still faithful a few hours,
For them, for thee, for thy past father's race,
And for thy sons' inheritance ?

Pan. 'Tis true !
From the deep urgency with which the prince
Despatch'd me to your sacred presence, I
Must dare to add my feeble voice to that
Which now has spoken.

Sar. No, it must not be.

Myr. For the sake of thy realm !

↳ [“ Wishing eternity to dust.” — MS.]

Sar.

Away!

Pan.

For that

Of all thy faithful subjects, who will rally
Round thee and thine.

Sar.

These are mere fantasies:

'There is no peril: —'t is a sullen scheme

Of Salemenes, to approve his zeal,

And show himself more necessary to us.

Myr. By all that's good and glorious take this
counsel.

Sar. Business to-morrow.

Myr.

Ay, or death to-night.

Sar. Why let it come then unexpectedly,

Midst joy and gentleness, and mirth and love;

So let me fall like the pluck'd rose! — far better

'Thus than be wither'd.

Myr.

Then thou wilt not yield,

Even for the sake of all that ever stirr'd

A monarch into action, to forego

A trifling revel.

Sar.

No.

Myr.

'Then yield for mine;

For my sake!

Sar.

'Thine, my Myrrha!

Myr.

'T is the first

Boon which I ever ask'd Assyria's king.

Sar. That's true, and were't my kingdom must be
granted.

Well, for thy sake, I yield me. Pania, hence!

Thou hear'st me.

Pan.

And obey.

[Exit PANIA.]

Sar.

I marvel at thee.

What is thy motive, Myrrha, thus to urge me?

Myr. Thy safety; and the certainty that nought
Could urge the prince thy kinsman to require
Thus much from thee, but some impending danger.

Sar. And if I do not dread it, why shouldst thou ?

Myr. Because *thou* dost not fear, I fear for *thee*.

Sar. To-morrow thou wilt smile at these vain fancies.

Myr. If the worst come, I shall be where none weep,
And that is better than the power to smile.
And thou ?

Sar. I shall be king, as heretofore.

Myr. Where ?

Sar. With Baal, Nimrod, and Semiramis,
Sole in Assyria, or with them elsewhere.
Fate made me what I am — may make me nothing —
But either that or nothing must I be :
I will not live degraded.

Myr. Hadst thou felt
- Thus always, none would ever dare degrade thee.

Sar. And who will do so now ?

Myr. Dost thou suspect none ?

Sar. Suspect ! — that's a spy's office. Oh ! we lose
Ten thousand precious moments in vain words,
And vainer fears. Within there ! — ye slaves, deck
The hall of Nimrod for the evening revel.
If I must make a prison of our palace,
At least we'll wear our fetters jocundly ;
If the Euphrates be forbid us, and
The summer dwelling on its beauteous border,
Here we are still unmenaced. Ho ! within there !

[*Exit SARDANAPALUS.*]

Myr. (sola). Why do I love this man ? My country's
daughters

Love none but heroes. But I have no country !
The slave hath lost all save her bonds. I love him ;
And that's the heaviest link of the long chain —
To love whom we esteem not. Be it so :
The hour is coming when he'll need all love,
And find none. To fall from him now were baser
Than to have stabb'd him on his throne when highest

Would have been noble in my country's creed :
I was not made for either. Could I save him,
I should not love *him* better, but myself ;
And I have need of the last, for I have fallen
In my own thoughts, by loving this soft stranger :
And yet methinks I love him more, perceiving
That he is hated of his own barbarians,
The natural foes of all the blood of Greece.
Could I but wake a single thought like those
Which even the Phrygians felt when battling long
'Twixt Ilion and the sea, within his heart,
He would tread down the barbarous crowds, and
triumph.

He loves me, and I love him ; the slave loves
Her master, and would free him from his vices.
If not, I have a means of freedom still,
And if I cannot teach him how to reign,
May show him how alone a king can leave
His throne. I must not lose him from my sight.

[*Exit.*¹

¹ [There are two of Lord Byron's characteristic excellences which he never leaves behind in his most fantastic expeditions, and which he has accordingly brought into his new domain of classic tragedy. One of these is his intense feeling of the loveliness of woman — his power, not only of picturing individual forms, but of infusing into the very atmosphere which surrounds them the spirit of beauty and of love. A soft roseate light is spread over them, which seems to sink into the soul. The other faculty to which we allude is his comprehensive sympathy with the vastest objects in the material universe. There is scarcely any pure description of individual scenes in all his works ; but the noblest allusions to the grandeurs of earth and heaven. He pays "no allegiance but to the elements." The moon, the stars, the ocean, the mountain desert, are endowed by him with new "speech and language," and send to the heart their mighty voices. He can interpret between us and the firmament, or give us all the sentiment of an everlasting solitude. — ANON.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

The Portal of the same Hall of the Palace.

Beleses (solus). The sun goes down : methinks he sets
more slowly,

Taking his last look of Assyria's empire.

How red he glares amongst those deepening clouds,

Like the blood he predicts. If not in vain,

'Thou sun that sinkest, and ye stars which rise,

I have outwatch'd ye, reading ray by ray

The edicts of your orbs, which make Time tremble

For what he brings the nations, 't is the furthest

Hour of Assyria's years. And yet how calm !

An earthquake should announce so great a fall —

A summer's sun discloses it. Yon disk,

To the star-read Chaldean, bears upon

Its everlasting page the end of what

Seem'd everlasting ; but oh ! thou true sun !

The burning oracle of all that live,

As fountain of all life, and symbol of

Him who bestows it, wherefore dost thou limit

Thy lore unto calamity ? Why not

Unfold the rise of days more worthy thine

All-glorious burst from ocean ? why not dart

A beam of hope athwart the future years,

As of wrath to its days ? Hear me ! oh, hear me !

I am thy worshipper, thy priest, thy servant —

I have gazed on thee at thy rise and fall,

And bow'd my head beneath thy mid-day beams,

When my eye dared not meet thee. I have watch'd

For thee, and after thee, and pray'd to thee,

And sacrific'd to thee, and read, and fear'd thee, •

And ask'd of thee, and thou hast answer'd — but

Only to thus much : while I speak, he sinks —

Is gone — and leaves his beauty, not his knowledge,
To the delighted west, which revels in
Its hues of dying glory. Yet what is
Death, so it be but glorious? 'Tis a sunset;
And mortals may be happy to resemble
The gods but in decay.

Enter ARBACES, by an inner door.

Arb. Beleses, why
So wrapt in thy devotions? Dost thou stand
Gazing to trace thy disappearing god
Into some realm of undiscover'd day?
Our business is with night — 'tis come.

Bel. But not
Gone.

Arb. Let it roll on — we are ready.

Bel. Yes.
Would it were over!

Arb. Does the prophet doubt,
To whom the very stars shine victory?

Bel. I do not doubt of victory — but the victor.

Arb. Well, let thy science settle that. Meantime
I have prepared as many glittering spears
As will out-sparkle our allies — your planets.
There is no more to thwart us. The she-king,
That less than woman, is even now upon
The waters with his female mates. The order
Is issued for the feast in the pavilion.
The first cup which he drains will be the last
Quaff'd by the line of Nimrod.

Bel. 'T was a brave one.

Arb. And is a weak one — 't is worn out — we'll mend
it.

Bel. Art sure of that?

Arb. Its founder was a hunter —
I am a soldier — what is there to fear?

Bel. The soldier.

Arb. And the priest, it may be: but
If you thought thus, or think, why not retain
Your king of concubines? why stir me up?
Why spur me to this enterprise? your own
No less than mine?

Bel. Look to the sky!

Arb. I look.

Bel. What seest thou?

Arb. A fair summer's twilight, and
The gathering of the stars.

Bel. And midst them, mark
Yon earliest, and the brightest, which so quivers,
As it would quit its place in the blue ether.

Arb. Well!

Bel. 'Tis thy natal ruler — thy birth planet.

Arb. (*touching his scabbard*). My star is in this scab-
bard: when it shines,

It shall out-dazzle comets. Let us think

Of what is to be done to justify

Thy planets and their portents. When we conquer,
They shall have temples — ay, and priests — and thou
Shalt be the pontiff of — what gods thou wilt;

For I observe that they are ever just,

And own the bravest for the most devout.

Bel. Ay, and the most devout for brave — thou hast
not

Seen me turn back from battle.

Arb. No; I own thee
As firm in fight as Babylonia's captain,
As skilful in Chaldea's worship: now,
Will it but please thee to forget the priest,
And be the warrior?

Bel. Why not both?

Arb. The better;
And yet it almost shames me, we shall have

So little to effect. This woman's warfare
Degrades the very conqueror. To have pluck'd
A bold and bloody despot from his throne,
And grappled with him, clashing steel with steel,
That were heroic or to win or fall ;
But to upraise my sword against this silkworm,
And hear him whine, it may be —

Bel. Do not deem it :
He has that in him which may make you strife yet ;
And were he all you think, his guards are hardy,
And headed by the cool, stern Salemenes.

Arb. They 'll not resist.

Bel. Why not ? they are soldiers.

Arb. True,
And therefore need a soldier to command them.

Bel. That Salemenes is.

Arb. But not their king
Besides, he hates the effeminate thing that governs,
For the queen's sake, his sister. Mark you not
He keeps aloof from all the revels ?

Bel. But
Not from the council — there he is ever constant.

Arb. And ever thwarted : what would you have more
To make a rebel out of ? A fool reigning,
His blood dishonour'd, and himself disdain'd :
Why, it is *his* revenge we work for.

Bel. Could
He but be brought to think so : this I doubt of.

Arb. What, if we sound him ?

Bel. Yes — if the time served.

Enter BALEA.

Bel. Satraps ! The king commands your presence at
The feast to-night.

Bel. To hear is to obey
In the pavilion ?

Bal. No ; here in the palace.

Arb. How ! in the palace ? it was not thus order'd.

Bal. It is so order'd now.

Arb. And why ?

Bal. I know not.

May I retire ?

Arb. Stay.

Bel. (*to Arb. aside*). Hush ! let him go his way.

(*Alternately to Bal.*) Yes, Balea, thank the monarch,
kiss the hem

Of his imperial robe, and say, his slaves
Will take the crumbs he deigns to scatter from
His royal table at the hour — was 't midnight ?

Bal. It was : the place, the hall of Nimrod. Lords,
I humble me before you, and depart. [*Exit BALEA.*]

Arb. I like not this same sudden change of place ;
There is some mystery : wherefore should he change
it ?

Bel. Doth he not change a thousand times a day ?
Sloth is of all things the most fanciful —
And moves more parasangs in its intents
Than generals in their marches, when they seek
To leave their foe at fault. — Why dost thou muse ?

Arb. He loved that gay pavilion, — it was ever
His summer dotage.

Bel. And he loved his queen —
And thrice a thousand harlotry besides —
And he has loved all things by turns, except
Wisdom and glory.

Arb. Still — I like it not.
If he has changed — why, so must we : the attack
Were easy in the isolated bower,
Beset with drowsy guards and drunken courtiers ;
But 'in the hall of Nimrod —

Bel. Is it so ?
Methought the haughty soldier fear'd to mount

A throne too easily — does it disappoint thee
To find there is a slipperier step or two
Than what was counted on ?

Arb. When the hour comes,
Thou shalt perceive how far I fear or no.
Thou hast seen my life at stake — and gaily play'd for :
But here is more upon the die — a kingdom.

Bel. I have foretold already — thou wilt win it.
Then on, and prosper.

Arb. Now were I a soothsayer,
I would have boded so much to myself.
But be the stars obey'd — I cannot quarrel
With them, nor their interpreter. Who's here ?

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. Satraps !

Bel. My prince !

Sal. Well met — I sought ye both,
But elsewhere than the palace.

Arb. Wherefore so ?

Sal. 'Tis not the hour.

Arb. The hour ! — what hour ?

Sal. Of midnight.

Bel. Midnight, my lord !

Sal. What, are you not invited ?

Bel. Oh ! yes — we had forgotten.

Sal. Is it usual

Thus to forget a sovereign's invitation ?

Arb. Why — we but now received it.

Sal. Then why here ?

Arb. On duty.

Sal. On what duty ?

Bel. On the state's.

We have the privilege to approach the presence ;
But found the monarch absent.¹

¹ [“ But found the monarch claim'd his privacy.” — MS.]

Sal. And I too
Am upon duty.

Arb. May we crave its purport?

Sal. To arrest two traitors. Guards! Within there

Enter Guards.

Sal. (continuing). Satraps,
Your swords.

Bel. (delivering his). My lord, behold my scimitar.

Arb. (drawing his sword). Take mine.

Sal. (advancing). I will.

Arb. But in your heart the blade —
The hilt quits not this hand.¹

Sal. (drawing). How! dost thou brave me?
T is well — this saves a trial, and false mercy.
Soldiers, hew down the rebel!

Arb. Soldiers! Ay —
Alone you dare not.

Sal. Alone! foolish slave — [from
What is there in thee that a prince should shrink
Of open force? We dread thy treason, not
Thy strength: thy tooth is nought without its venom —
The serpent's, not the lion's. Cut him down.

Bel. (interposing). Arbaces! Are you mad? Have
I not render'd

My sword? Then trust like me our sovereign's justice.

Arb. No — I will sooner trust the stars thou prat'st
And this slight arm, and die a king at least [of,
Of my own breath and body — so far that
None else shall chain them.

Sal. (to the Guards), You hear him and me.
Take him not, — kill.

[The Guards attack ARBACES, who defends himself
valiantly and dexterously till they waver.

[—¹ not else
It quits this living hand."—MS.]

Sal. Is it even so ; and must
I do the hangman's office ? Recreants ! see
How you should fell a traitor.

[*SALEMENES attacks ARBACES.*]

Enter SARDANAPALUS and Train.

Sar. Hold your hands —
Upon your lives, I say. What, deaf or drunken ?
My sword ! O fool, I wear no sword : here, fellow,
Give me thy weapon. [*To a Guard.*

[*SARDANAPALUS snatches a sword from one of the
soldiers, and rushes between the combatants — they
separate.*]

Sar. In my very palace !
What hinders me from cleaving you in twain,
Audacious brawlers ?

Bel. Sire, your justice.

Sal. Or —
Your weakness.

Sar. (*raising the sword.*) How ?

Sal. Strike ! so the blow 's repeated
Upon you traitor — whom you spare a moment,
I trust, for torture — I 'm content.

Sar. What — him !
Who dares assail Arbaces ?

Sal. I !

Sar. Indeed !
Prince, you forget yourself. Upon what warrant ?

Sal. (*showing the signet.*) Thine.

Arb. (*confused.*) The king's !

Sal. Yes ! and let the king confirm it.

Sar. I parted not from this for such a purpose.

Sal. You parted with it for your safety — I
Employ'd it for the best. Pronounce in person.
Here I am but your slave — a moment past
I was your representative.

Sar.
Your swords.

Then sheathe

[ARBACES and SALEMENUS return their swords to the scabbards.]

Sal. Mine's sheathed : I pray you sheathe *not* yours :
'Tis the sole sceptre left you now with safety.

Sar. A heavy one ; the hilt, too, hurts my hand.
(*To a Guard.*) Here, fellow, take thy weapon back.

Well, sirs,
What doth this mean ?

Bel. The prince must answer that.

Sal. Truth upon my part, treason upon theirs.

Sar. Treason — Arbaces ! treachery and Beleses !
That were an union I will not believe.

Where is the proof ?

Sal. I'll answer that, if once
The king demands your fellow-traitor's sword.

Arb. (*to Sal.*) A sword which hath been drawn as
oft as thine

Against his foes.

Sal. And now against his brother,
And in an hour or so against himself.

Sar. That is not possible : he dared not ; no —
No — I'll not hear of such things. These vain
bickerings

Are spawn'd in courts by base intrigues, and baser
Hirelings, who live by lies on good men's lives.
You must have been deceived, my brother.

Sal. First
Let him deliver up his weapon, and
Proclaim himself your subject by that duty,
And I will answer all.

Sar. Why, if I thought so —
But no, it cannot be : the Mede Arbaces —
The trusty, rough, true soldier — the best captain
Of all who discipline our nations — No,

I'll not insult him thus, to bid him render
The scimitar to me he never yielded
Unto our enemies. Chief, keep your weapon.

Sal. (delivering back the signet). Monarch, take back
your signet.

Sar. No, retain it ;
But use it with more moderation.

Sal. Sire,
I used it for your honour, and restore it
Because I cannot keep it with my own.
Bestow it on Arbaces.

Sar. So I should :
He never ask'd it.

Sal. Doubt not, he will have it,
Without that hollow semblance of respect.

Bel. I know not what hath prejudiced the prince
So strongly 'gainst two subjects, than whom none
Have been more zealous for Assyria's weal.

Sal. Peace, factious priest, and faithless soldier ! thou
Unit'st in thy own person the worst vices
Of the most dangerous orders of mankind.
Keep thy smooth words and juggling homilies
For those who know thee not. Thy fellow's sin
Is, at the least, a bold one, and not temper'd
By the tricks taught thee in Chaldea.

Bel. Hear him,
My liege — the son of Belus ! he blasphemes
The worship of the land, which bows the knee
Before your fathers.

Sar. Oh ! for that I pray you
Let him have absolution. I dispense with
The worship of dead men ; feeling that I
Am mortal, and believing that the race [ashes.
From whence I sprung are — what I see them —

Bel. King ! Do not deem so : they are with the stars.
And —

Sar. You shall join them there ere they will rise,
If you preach farther — Why, *this* is rank treason.

Sal. My lord !

Sar. To school me in the worship of
Assyria's idols ! Let him be released —
Give him his sword.

Sal. My lord, and king, and brother,
I pray ye pause.

Sar. Yes, and be sermonised,
And dinn'd, and deafen'd with dead men and Baal,
And all Chaldea's starry mysteries.

Bel. Monarch ! respect them.

Sar. Oh ! for that — I love them ;
I love to watch them in the deep blue vault,
And to compare them with my Myrrha's eyes ;
I love to see their rays redoubled in
The tremulous silver of Euphrates' wave,
As the light breeze of midnight crisps the broad
And rolling water, sighing through the sedges
Which fringe his banks : but whether they may be
Gods, as some say, or the abodes of gods,
As others hold, or simply lamps of night,
Worlds, or the lights of worlds, I know nor care not.
There's something sweet in my uncertainty
I would not change for your Chaldean lore ;
Besides, I know of these all clay can know
Of aught above it, or below it — nothing.
I see their brilliancy and feel their beauty — ¹
When they shine on my grave I shall know neither.

Bel. For *neither*, sire, say *better*.

Sar. I will wait,
If it so please you, pontiff, for that knowledge.
In the mean time receive your sword, and know
That I prefer your service militant
Unto your ministry — not loving either.

¹ [“ I know them beautiful, and see them brilliant.” — MS.]

Sat. (*aside*). His lusts have made him mad. Then
must I save him,
Spite of himself.

Sar. Please you to hear me, Satraps !
And chiefly thou, my priest, because I doubt thee
More than the soldier ; and would doubt thee all
Wert thou not half a warrior : let us part
In peace — I'll not say pardon — which must be
Earn'd by the guilty ; this I'll not pronounce ye,
Although upon this breath of mine depends
Your own ; and, deadlier for ye, on my fears.
But fear not — for that I am soft, not fearful —
And so live on. Were I the thing some think me,
Your heads would now be dripping the last drops
Of their attainted gore from the high gates
Of this our palace, into the dry dust,
Their only portion of the coveted kingdom
They would be crown'd to reign o'er — let that pass.
As I have said, I will not *deem* ye guilty,
Nor *doom* ye guiltless. Albeit better men
Than ye or I stand ready to arraign you ;
And should I leave your fate to sterner judges,
And proofs of all kinds, I might sacrifice
Two men, who, whatsoe'er they now are, were
Once honest. Ye are free, sirs.

Arb. Sire, this clemency —

Bel. (*interrupting him*). Is worthy of yourself ; and,
although innocent,

We thank —

Sar. Priest ! keep your thanksgivings for Belus ;
His offspring needs none.

Bel. But being innocent —

Sar. Be silent — Guilt is loud. If ye are loyal,
Ye are injured men, and should be sad, not grateful.

Bel. So we should be, were justice always done

By earthly power omnipotent ; but innocence
Must oft receive her right as a mere favour.

Sar. That's a good sentence for a homily,
Though not for this occasion. Prithee keep it
To plead thy sovereign's cause before his people.

Bel. I trust there is no cause.

Sar. No cause, perhaps ;

But many causers : — if ye meet with such
In the exercise of your inquisitive function
On earth, or should you read of it in heaven
In some mysterious twinkle of the stars,
Which are your chronicles, I pray you note,
That there are worse things betwixt earth and heaven
Than him who ruleth many and slays none ;
And, hating not himself, yet loves his fellows
Enough to spare even those who would not spare him
Were they once masters—but that's doubtful. Satraps !
Your swords and persons are at liberty
To use them as ye will — but from this hour
I have no call for either. Salemenes !
Follow me. ¹

[*Exeunt* SARDANAPALUS, SALEMENES, and the
Train, &c., having ARBACES and BESESSES.

Arb. Beleses !

Bel. Now, what think you ?

Arb. That we are lost.

Bel. That we have won the kingdom.

Arb. What ? thus suspected — with the sword slung
o'er us

But by a single hair, and that still wavering,

¹ [The second act is, we think, a failure. The conspirators have a tedious dialogue, which is interrupted by Salemenes with a guard. Salemenes is followed by the king, who reverses all his measures, pardons Arbaces, because he will not believe him guilty, and Beleses, in order to escape from his long speeches about the national religion. This incident only is well managed. — HEBER.]

To be blown down by his imperious breath
Which spared us — why, I know not.

Bel.

Seek not why ;

But let us profit by the interval.

The hour is still our own — our power the same --
The night the same we destined. He hath changed
Nothing except our ignorance of all
Suspicion into such a certainty
As must make madness of delay.

Arb.

And yet —

Bel. What, doubting still ?

Arb.

He spared our lives, nay, more,
Saved them from Salenienes.

Bel.

And how long

Will he so spare ? till the first drunken minute.

Arb. Or sober, rather. Yet he did it nobly ;

Gave royally what we had forfeited

Basely —

Bel.

Say bravely.

Arb.

Somewhat of both, perhaps.

But it has touch'd me, and, whate'er betide,

I will no further on.

Bel.

And lose the world !

Arb. Lose any thing except my own esteem.

Bel. I blush that we should owe our lives to such

A king of distaffs !

Arb.

But no less we owe them ;

And I should blush far more to take the grantor's !

Bel. Thou may'st endure whate'er thou wilt — the
Have written otherwise. [stars

Arb.

Though they came down,

And marshall'd me the way in all their brightness,

I would not follow.

Bel.

This is weakness — worse

Than a scared beldam's dreaming of the dead,

And waking in the dark. — Go to — go to ?

Arb. Methought he look'd like Nimrod as he spoke,
Even as the proud imperial statue stands
Looking the monarch of the kings around it,
And sways, while they but ornament, the temple.

Bel I told you that you had too much despised him,
And that there was some royalty within him —
What then? he is the nobler foe.

Arb. But we
The meaner. — Would he had not spared us !

Bel. So —
Wouldst thou be sacrificed thus readily ?

Arb. No — but it had been better to have died
Than live ungrateful.

Bel. Oh, the souls of some men !
Thou wouldst digest what some call treason, and
Fools treachery — and, behold, upon the sudden,
Because for something or for nothing, this
Rash reveller steps, ostentatiously,
'T wixt thee and Salemenes, thou art turn'd
Into — what shall I say ? — Sardanapalus !
I know no name more ignominious.

Arb. But
An hour ago, who dared to term me such
Had held his life but lightly — as it is,
I must forgive you, even as he forgave us —
Semiramis herself would not have done it.

Bel. No — the queen liked no sharers of the king-
dom,
Not even a husband.

Arb. I must serve him truly —

Bel. And humbly ?

Arb. No, sir, proudly — being honest.
I shall be nearer thrones than you to heaven ;
And ~~if~~ not quite so haughty, yet more lofty .
You may do your own deeming — you have codes,
And mysteries, and corollaries of

Right and wrong, which I lack for my direction,
And must pursue but what a plain heart teaches.
And now you know me.

Bel. Have you finish'd ?

Arb. Yes --

With you.

Bel. And would, perhaps, betray as well

As quit me ?

Arb. That's a sacerdotal thought,

And not a soldier's.

Bel. Be it what you will --

'Truce with these wranglings, and but hear me.

Arb. No --

There is more peril in your subtle spirit

Than in a phalanx.

Bel. If it must be so --

I'll on alone.

Arb. Alone !

Bel. Thrones hold but one.

Arb. But this is fill'd.

Bel. With worse than vacancy --

A despised monarch. Look to it, Arbaces :

I have still aided, cherish'd, loved, and urged you ;

Was willing even to serve you, in the hope

To serve and save Assyria. Heaven itself

Seem'd to consent, and all events were friendly,

Even to the last, till that your spirit shrunk

Into a shallow softness ; but now, rather

Than see my country languish, I will be

Her saviour or the victim of her tyrant,

Or one or both, for sometimes both are one ;

And if I win, Arbaces is my servant.

Arb. Your servant !

Bel. Why not ? better than be slave,

The pardon'd slave of *she* Sardanapalus !

Enter PANIA.

Pan. My lords, I bear an order from the king.

Arb. It is obey'd ere spoken.

Bel. Notwithstanding,
Let's hear it.

Pan. Forthwith, on this very night,
Repair to your respective satrapies
Of Babylon and Media.

Bel. With our troops?

Pan. My order is unto the satraps and
Their household train.

Arb. But ——

Bel. It must be obey'd:
Say, we depart.

Pan. My order is to see you
Depart, and not to bear your answer.

Bel. (aside). Ay!
Well, sir, we will accompany you hence.

Pan. I will retire to marshal forth the guard
Of honour which befits your rank, and wait
Your leisure, so that it the hour exceeds not.

[*Exit PANIA.*]

Bel. Now then obey!

Arb. Doubtless.

Bel. Yes, to the gates
That grate the palace, which is now our prison —
No further.

Arb. Thou hast harp'd the truth indeed!
The realm itself, in all its wide extension,
Yawns dungeons at each step for thee and me.

Bel. Graves!

Arb. If I thought so, this good sword should dig
One more than mine.

Bel. It shall have work enough.
Let me hope better than thou augurst;

At present, let us hence as best we may.
Thou dost agree with me in understanding
This order as a sentence?

Arb. Why, what other
Interpretation should it bear? it is
The very policy of orient monarchs —
Pardon and poison — favours and a sword —
A distant voyage, and an eternal sleep.
How many satraps in his father's time —
For he I own is, or at least *was*, bloodless —

Bel. But *will* not, *can* not be so now.

Arb. I doubt it.

How many satraps have I seen set out
In his sire's day for mighty vice-royalties,
Whose tombs are on their path! I know not how,
But they all sicken'd by the way, it was
So long and heavy.

Bel. Let us but regain
The free air of the city, and we'll shorten
The journey.

Arb. 'T will be shorten'd at the gates,
It may be.

Bel. No; they hardly will risk that.
'They mean us to die privately, but not
Within the palace or the city walls,
Where we are known, and may have partisans:
If they had meant to slay us here, we were
No longer with the living. Let us hence.

Arb. If I but thought he did not mean my life——

Bel. Fool! hence — what else should despotism
alarin'd

Mean? Let us but rejoin our troops, and march.

Arb. Towards our provinces?

Bel. No; towards your kingdom.
There's time, there's heart, and hope, and power, and
means,

Which their half measures leave us in full scope. —
Away!

Arb. And I even yet repenting must
Relapse to guilt!

Bel. Self-defence is a virtue,
Solc bulwark of all right. Away, I say!
Let's leave this place, the air grows thick and choking,
And the walls have a scent of night-shade — hence!
Let us not leave them time for further council.
Our quick departure proves our civic zeal;
Our quick departure hinders our good escort,
The worthy Pania, from anticipating
The orders of some parasangs from hence:
Nay, there's no other choice, but — hence, I say.

[*Exit with ARBACES, who follows reluctantly.*]¹

¹ [Arbaces is a mere common-place warrior; and Beleses, on whom, we suspect, Lord Byron has bestowed more than usual pains, is a very ordinary and uninteresting villain. Sardanapalus indeed, and Salemenes, are both made to speak of the wily Chaldean as the master-mover of the plot, as a politician in whose hands Arbaces is but a "warlike puppet," and Diodorus Siculus has represented him, in fact, as the first instigator of Arbaces to his treason, and as making use of his priestly character, and his supposed power of foretelling future events, to inflame the ambition, to direct the measures, to sustain the hopes, and to reprove the despondency of his comrade. But of all this nothing appears in the tragedy. Lord Byron has been so anxious to show his own contempt for the priest, that he has not even allowed him that share of cunning and evil influence which was necessary for the part which he had to fill. Instead of being the original, the restless and unceasing prompter to bold and wicked measures, we find him, on his first appearance, hanging back from the enterprise, and chilling the energy of Arbaces by an enumeration of the real or possible difficulties which might yet impede its execution. Instead of exercising that power over the mind of his comrade which a religious impostor may well possess over better and more magnanimous souls than his own, Beleses is made to pour his predictions into incredulous ears; and Arbaces is as mere an epicurean in his creed as Sardanapalus. When we might have expected to find him gazing with hope and reverence on the star which the Chaldean points out as his natal planet, the Median warrior speaks, in the language of Mezentius, of the sword on which *his* confidence depends, and instead of being a tool in the hand of the pontiff, he says almost every thing which is likely to

Enter SARDANAPALUS and SALMFNFES.

Sar. Well, all is remedied, and without bloodshed,
That worst of mockeries of a remedy ;
We are now secure by these men's exile.

Sal. Yes,
As he who treads on flowers is from the adder
Twined round their roots.

Sar. Why, what wouldst have me do ?

Sal. Undo what you have done.

Sar. Revoke my pardon ?

Sal. Replace the crown now tottering on your
temples.

Sar. That were tyrannical.

Sal. But sure.

Sar. We are so.

What danger can they work upon the frontier ?

Sal. They are not there yet — never should they be
so,

Were I well listen'd to.

Sar. Nay, I *have* listen'd

Impartially to thee — why not to them ?

Sal. You may know that hereafter ; as it is,
I take my leave to order forth the guard.

Sar. And you will join us at the banquet ?

Sal. Sire,

Dispense with me — I am no wassailer :

Command me in all service save the Bacchant's.

Sar. Nay, but 't is fit to revel now and then.

affront him. Though Beleses is introduced to us as engaged in devotion, and as a fervent worshipper of the Sun, he is no where made either to feel or to counterfeit that *professional* zeal against Sardanapalus which his open contempt of the gods would naturally call for ; and no reason appears, throughout the play, why Arbaces should follow, against his own conscience and opinion, the counsels of a man of whom he speaks with dislike and disgust, and whose pretences to inspiration and sanctity he treats with unmingled ridicule. — BISHOP HEBER.]

Sal. And fit that some should watch for those who
revel

Too oft. Am I permitted to depart?

Sar. Yes — Stay a moment, my good Salemenes,
My brother, my best subject, better prince
Than I am king. You should have been the monarch,
And I — I know not what, and care not; but
Think not I am insensible to all
Thine honest wisdom, and thy rough yet kind,
Though oft reproving, sufferance of my follies.
If I have spared these men against thy counsel,
That is, their lives — it is not that I doubt
The advice was sound; but, let them live: we will
not

Cavil about their lives — so let them mend them.
Their banishment will leave me still sound sleep,
Which their death had not left me.

Sal. Thus you run
The risk to sleep for ever, to save traitors —
A moment's pang now changed for years of crime.
Still let them be made quiet.

Sar. Tempt me not;
My word is past.

Sal. But it may be recall'd.

Sar. 'Tis royal.

Sal. And should therefore be decisive.
This half indulgence of an exile serves
But to provoke — a pardon should be full,
Or it is none.

Sar. And who persuaded me
After I had repeal'd them, or at least
Only dismiss'd them from our presence, who
Urged me to send them to their satrapies?

Sal. True; that I had forgotten; that is, sire,
If they e'er reach'd their satrapies — why, then,
Reprove me more for my advice.

Sar. And if
They do not reach them — look to it! — in safety,
In safety, mark me — and security —
Look to thine own.

Sal. Permit me to depart;
Their *safety* shall be cared for.

Sar. Get thee hence, then;
And, prithee, think more gently of thy brother.

Sal. Sire, I shall ever duly serve my sovereign.

[*Exit SALEMENES.*

Sar. (solus). That man is of a temper too severe;
Hard but as lofty as the rock, and free
From all the taints of common earth — while I
Am softer clay, impregnated with flowers:
But as our mould is, must the produce be.
If I have err'd this time, 't is on the side
Where error sits most lightly on that sense,
I know not what to call it; but it reckons
With me oftentimes for pain, and sometimes pleasure;
A spirit which seems placed about my heart
To count its throbs, not quicken them, and ask
Questions which mortal never dared to ask me,
Nor Baal, though an oracular deity —¹
Albeit his marble face majestic
Frowns as the shadows of the evening dim
His brows to changed expression, till at times
I think the statue looks in act to speak.
Away with these vain thoughts, I will be joyous —
And here comes Joy's true herald.

Enter MYRRHA.

Myr. King! the sky
Is overcast, and musters muttering thunder,
In clouds that seem approaching fast, and show,

¹ ["Nor silent Baal, our Imaged deity,
Although his marble face looks frowningly
As the dull shadows," &c.—MS.]

In forked flashes a commanding tempest. ¹
Will you then quit the palace?

Sar. Tempest, say'st thou?

Myr. Ay, my good lord.

Sar. For my own part, I should be
Not ill content to vary the smooth scene,
And watch the warring elements; but this
Would little suit the silken garments and
Smooth faces of our festive friends. Say, Myrrha,
Art thou of those who dread the roar of clouds?

Myr. In my own country we respect their voices
As auguries of Jove. ²

Sar. Jove! — ay, your Baal —
Ours also has a property in thunder,
And ever and anon some falling bolt
Proves his divinity, — and yet sometimes
Strikes his own altars.

Myr. That were a dread omen.

Sar. Yes — for the priests. Well, we will not go forth
Beyond the palace walls to-night, but make
Our feast within.

Myr. Now, Jove be praised! that he
Hath heard the prayer thou wouldst not hear. The
 gods

Are kinder to thee than thou to thyself,
And flash this storm between thee and thy foes,
To shield thee from them.

Sar. Child, if there be peril,
Methinks it is the same within these walls
As on the river's brink.

Myr. Not so; these walls
Are high and strong, and guarded. Treason has
To penetrate through many a winding way,

[" In distant flashes { a wide-spreading }
 { the approaching } tempest." - MS.]

[" As from the gods to augur." — MS.]

And massy portal; but in the pavilion
There is no bulwark.

Sar. No, nor in the palace,
Nor in the fortress, nor upon the top
Of cloud-fenced Caucasus, where the eagle sits
Nested in pathless clefts, if treachery be :
Even as the arrow finds the airy king,
The steel will reach the earthly. But be calm .
The men, or innocent or guilty, are
Banish'd, and far upon their way.

Myr. They live, then .

Sar. So sanguinary? *Thou!*

Myr. I would not shrink
From just infliction of due punishment
On those who seek your life · were't otherwise,
I should not merit mine. Besides, you heard
The princely Salemenes.

Sar. This is strange ;
The gentle and the austere are both against me,
And urge me to revenge.

Myr. 'T is a Greek virtue.

Sar. But not a kingly one — I'll none on 't ; or
If ever I indulge in 't, it shall be
With kings — my equals.

Myr. These men sought to be so.

Sar. Myrrha, this is too feminine, and springs
From fear —

Myr. For you.

Sar. No matter, still 't is fear.
I have observed your sex, once roused to wrath,
Are timidly vindictive to a pitch
Of perseverance, which I would not copy.
I thought you were exempt from this, as from
The childish helplessness of Asian women. ¹

Myr. My lord, I am no boaster of my love,

¹ [“ The weaker merit of our Asian women.” — MS.]

Nor of my attributes ; I have shared your splendour,
 And will partake your fortunes. You may live
 To find one slave more true than subject myriads :
 But this the gods avert ! I am content
 To be beloved on trust for what I feel,
 Rather than prove it to you in your griefs, ¹
 Which might not yield to any cares of mine.

Sar. Grief cannot come where perfect love exists,
 Except to heighten it, and vanish from
 That which it could not scare away. Let's in —
 The hour approaches, and we must prepare
 To meet the invited guests who grace our feast.
[*Exeunt.* ?

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*The Hall of the Palace illuminated — SARDANAPALUS
 and his Guests at Table. — A storm without, and
 Thunder occasionally heard during the Banquet.*

Sar. Fill full ! why this is as it should be : here
 Is my true realm, amidst bright eyes and faces
 Happy as fair ! Here sorrow cannot reach.

Zam. Nor elsewhere — where the king is, pleasure
 sparkles.

Sar. Is not this better now than Nimrod's huntings,
 Or my wild grandam's chase in search of kingdoms
 She could not keep when conquer'd ?

Alt. Mighty though

¹ [“ Rather than prove that love to you in griefs.” — MS.]

² [The second Act, which contains the details of the conspiracy of Arbaces, its detection by the vigilance of Salemenes, and the too rash and hasty forgiveness of the rebels by the king, is, on the whole, heavy and uninteresting. — JEFFREY.]

They were, as all thy royal line have been,
Yet none of those who went before have reach'd
The acme of Sardanapalus, who
Has placed his joy in peace — the sole true glory.

Sar. And pleasure, good Altada, to which glory
Is but the path. What is it that we seek?
Enjoyment! We have cut the way short to it,
And not gone tracking it through human ashes,
Making a grave with every footstep.

Zam. No;

All hearts are happy, and all voices bless
The king of peace, who holds a world in jubilee.

Sar. Art sure of that? I have heard otherwise;
Some say that there be traitors.

Zam. Traitors they
Who dare to say so! — 'T is impossible.
What cause?

Sar. What cause? true, — fill the goblet up;
We will not think of them: there are none such,
Or if there be, they are gone.

Alt. Guests, to my pledge!
Down on your knees, and drink a measure to
The safety of the king — the monarch, say I?
The god Sardanapalus!

[*ZAMES and the Guests kneel, and exclaim —*
Mightier than

His father Baal, the god Sardanapalus!

[*It thunders as they kneel, some start up in*
confusion.

Zam. Why do you rise, my friends? in that strong peal
His father gods consented.

Myr. Menaced, rather.
King, wilt thou bear this mad impiety?

Sar. Impiety! — nay, if the sires who reign'd
Before me can be gods, I'll not disgrace
Their lineage. But arise, my pious friends;

Hoard your devotion for the thunderer there :
I seek but to be loved, not worshipp'd.

Alt.

Both —

Both you must ever be by all true subjects.

Sar. Methinks the thunders still increase : it is
An awful night.

Myr.

Oh yes, for those who have
No palace to protect their worshippers.

Sar. That's true, my Myrrha ; and could I convert
My realm to one wide shelter for the wretched,
I'd do it.

Myr. Thou 'rt no god, then, not to be
Able to work a will so good and general,
As thy wish would imply.

Sar. And your gods, then,
Who can, and do not ?

Myr.

Do not speak of that,
Lest we provoke them.

Sar. True, they love not censure
Better than mortals. Friends, a thought has struck me :
Were there no temples, would there, think ye, be
Air worshippers ? that is, when it is angry,
And pelting as even now.

Myr.

The Persian prays
Upon his mountain.

Sar.

Yes, when the sun shines.

Myr. And I would ask if this your palace were
Unroof'd and desolate, how many flatterers
Would lick the dust in which the king lay low ?

Alt. The fair Ionian is too sarcastic
Upon a nation whom she knows not well ;
The Assyrians know no pleasure but their king's,
And homage is their pride.

Sár.

Nay, pardon, guosts,
The fair Greek's readiness of speech.

Alt.

Pardon ! sire :

We honour her of all things next to thee.

Hark ! what was that ?

Zam. That ! nothing but the jar
Of distant portals shaken by the wind.

Alt. It sounded like the clash of — hark again !

Zam. The big rain pattering on the roof.

Sar. No more.

Myrrha, my love, hast thou thy shell in order ?

Sing me a song of Sappho, her, thou know'st,

Who in thy country threw —

*Enter PANIA, with his sword and garments bloody, and disordered. The guests rise in confusion.*¹

Pan. (to the Guards). Look to the portals ;
And with your best speed to the walls without.
Your arms ! To arms ! The king's in danger. Mon-
Excuse this haste, — 't is faith. [arch !

Sar. Speak on.

Pan. It is

As Salemenes fear'd ; the faithless satraps —

Sar. You are wounded — give some wine. Take
breath, good Pania.

Pan. 'T is nothing — a mere flesh wound. I am worn
More with my speed to warn my sovereign,
Than hurt in his defence.

Myr. Well, sir, the rebels ?

Pan. Soon as Arbaces and Beleses reach'd
Their stations in the city, they refused
To march ; and on my attempt to use the power
Which I was delegated with, they call'd
Upon their troops, who rose in fierce defiance.

Myr. All ?

¹ [Early in the third Act, the royal banquet is disturbed by sudden tidings of treason and revolt ; and then the reveller blazes out into the hero, and the Greek blood of Myrrha mounts to its proper office ! — JEFFREY.]

Pan. Too many.

Sar. Spare not of thy free speech,
To spare mine ears the truth.

Pan. My own slight guard
Were faithful, and what 's left of it is still so.

Myr. And are these all the force still faithful?

Pan. No —

The Bactrians, now led on by Salemenes,
Who even then was on his way, still urged
By strong suspicion of the Median chiefs,
Are numerous, and make strong head against
The rebels, fighting inch by inch, and forming
An orb around the palace, where they mean
To centre all their force, and save the king.

(*He hesitates.*) I am charged to —

Myr. 'Tis no time for hesitation

Pan. Prince Salemenes doth implore the king
To arm himself, although but for a moment,
And show himself unto the soldiers: his
Sole presence in this instant might do more
Than hosts can do in his behalf.

Sar. What, ho!

My armour there.

Myr. And wilt thou?

Sar. Will I not?

Ho, there! — but seek not for the buckler: 't is
Too heavy: — a light cuirass and my sword.
Where are the rebels?

Pan. Scarce a furlong's length
From the outward wall the fiercest conflict rages.

Sar. Then I may charge on horseback. Sfero, ho!
Order my horse out. — There is space enough
Even in our courts, and by the outer gate,
To marshal half the horsemen of Arabia.

[*Exit Sfero for the armour.*]

Myr. How I do love thee!

Sar. I ne'er doubted it.

Myr. But now I know thee.

Sar. (*to his Attendant*). Bring down my spear too. —
Where's Salemenes?

Pan. Where a soldier should be,
In the thick of the fight.

Sar. Then hasten to him — Is
The path still open, and communication
Left 'twixt the palace and the phalanx?

Pan. 'Twas
When I late left him, and I have no fear :
Our troops were steady, and the phalanx form'd.

Sar. Tell him to spare his person for the present,
And that I will not spare my own — and say,
I come.

Pan. There's victory in the very word.

[*Exit PANIA.*]

Sar. Altada — Zames — forth, and arm ye! There
Is all in readiness in the armoury.

See that the women are bestow'd in safety

In the remote apartments : let a guard

Be set before them, with strict charge to quit

The post but with their lives — command it, Zames.

Altada, arm yourself, and return here ;

Your post is near our person.

[*Exeunt ZAMES, ALTADA, and all save MYRRHA.*]

Enter SFFRO and others with the King's Arms, &c.

Sfe. King! your armour

Sar. (*arming himself*). Give me the cuirass — so :
my baldric ; now

My sword : I had forgot the helm — where is it ?

That's well — no, 't is too heavy : you mistake, too —

It was not this I meant, but that which bears

A diadem around it.

Sfe. Sire, I deem'd

That too conspicuous from the precious stones
To risk your sacred brow beneath — and trust me,
This is of better metal, though less rich. [Fellow!

Sar. You deem'd! Are you too turn'd a rebel?
Your part is to obey: return, and — no —
It is too late — I will go forth without it.

Sfe. At least, wear this.

Sar. Wear Caucasus! why, 't is
A mountain on my temples.

Sfe. Sire, the meanest
Soldier goes not forth thus exposed to battle.
All men will recognise you — for the storm
Has ceased, and the moon breaks forth in her bright-
ness.

Sar. I go forth to be recognised, and thus
Shall be so sooner. Now — my spear! I'm arm'd.

[In going stops short, and turns to SFERO.

Sfero — I had forgotten — bring the mirror.¹

Sfe. The mirror, sire?

Sar. Yes, sir, of polish'd brass,
Brought from the spoils of India — but be speedy.²
[Exit SFERO.]

¹ ["In the third Act, where Sardanapalus calls for a mirror to look at himself in his armour, recollect to quote the Latin passage from Juvenal upon Otho (a similar character, who did the same thing). Gifford will help you to it. The trait is, perhaps, too familiar, but it is historical (of Otho, at least), and natural in an effeminate character." — *Lord B. to Mr. M.*]

² ["Ille tenet speculum pathici gestamen Othonis,
Actoris Arunci spoliū, quo se ille videbat
Armatus, cum jam tolli vexilla juberet.
Res memoranda novis annalibus, atque recenti
Historia, speculum civilis sarcina belli." — *Juv. Sat. ii.*

"This grasps a mirror — pathic Otho's boast
(Auruncan Actor's spoil), where, while his host,
With shouts, the signal of the fight required,
He view'd his mailed form; view'd, and admired!
Lo, a new subject for the historic page,
A MIRROR, midst the arms of civil rage!" — GIFFORD.]

Sar. Myrrha, retire unto a place of safety.
Why went you not forth with the other damsels?

Myr. Because my place is here.

Sar. And when I am gone —

Myr. I follow.

Sar. You ! to battle ?

Myr. If it were so,
'T were not the first Greek girl had trod the path.
I will await here your *return*.

Sar. The place
Is spacious, and the first to be sought out,
If they prevail ; and, if it be so,
And I return not —

Myr. Still we meet again.

Sar. How ?

Myr. In the spot where all must meet at last —
In Hades ! If there be, as I believe,
A shore beyond the Styx ; and if there be not,
In ashes.

Sar. Darest thou so much ?

Myr. I dare all things
Except survive what I have loved, to be
A rebel's booty ; forth, and do your bravest.

Re-enter SFERO with the mirror.

Sar. (*looking at himself*). This cuirass fits me well,
the baldric better,
And the helm not at all. Methinks I seem
[*Flings away the helmet after trying it again.*
Passing well in these toys ; and now to prove them.
Altada ! Where 's Altada ?

Sfe. Waiting, sire,
Without ; he has your shield in readiness.

Sar. True ; I forgot he is my shield-bearer
By right of blood, derived from age to age. •
Myrrha, embrace me ; — yet once more — once more —

Love me, whate'er betide. My chiefest glory
Shall be to make me worthier of your love.

Myr. Go forth, and conquer !

[*Exeunt SARDANAPALUS and SFRERO.* ¹

Now, I am alone.

All are gone forth, and of that all how few
Perhaps return. Let him but vanquish, and
Me perish ! If he vanquish not, I perish ;
For I will not outlive him. He has wound
About my heart, I know not how nor why.
Not for that he is king ; for now his kingdom
Rocks underneath his throne, and the earth yawns
To yield him no more of it than a grave ;
And yet I love him more. Oh, mighty Jove !
Forgive this monstrous love for a barbarian,
Who knows not of Olympos ! yes, I love him
Now, now, far more than — Hark — to the war
shout !

Methinks it nears me. If it should be so,

[*She draws forth a small vial.*

This cunning Colchian poison, which my father
Learn'd to compound on Euxine shores, and taught
me

How to preserve, shall free me ! It had freed me
Long ere this hour, but that I loved, until
I half forgot I was a slave : — where all
Are slaves save one, and proud of servitude,
So they are served in turn by something lower .
In the degree of bondage, we forget
That shackles worn like ornaments no less

¹ [In the third Act, the king and his courtiers are disturbed at their banquet by the breaking out of the conspiracy. The battle which follows, if we overlook the absurdity, which occurs during one part of it, of hostile armies drawn up against each other in a dining-room, is extremely well told ; and Sardanapalus displays the precise mixture of effeminacy and courage, levity and talent, which belongs to his character. — BISHOP HEBER.]

Are chains. Again that shout ! and now the clash
Of arms — and now — and now —

Enter ALTADA.

Alt. Ho, Sfero, ho !

Myr. He is not here ; what wouldst thou with
him ? How

Goes on the conflict ?

Alt. Dubiously and fiercely.

Myr. And the king ?

Alt. Like a king. I must find Sfero,
And bring him a new spear and his own helmet.
He fights till now bare-headed, and by far
Too much exposed. The soldiers knew his face,
And the foe too ; and in the moon's broad light,
His silk tiara and his flowing hair
Make him a mark too royal. Every arrow
Is pointed at the fair hair and fair features,
And the broad fillet which crowns both.

Myr. Ye gods,
Who fulminate o'er my father's land, protect him !
Were you sent by the king ?

Alt. By Salemenes,
Who sent me privily upon this charge,
Without the knowledge of the careless sovereign.
The king ! the king fights as he revels ! ho !
What, Sfero ! I will seek the armoury —
He must be there. [*Exit ALTADA.*

Myr. 'Tis no dishonour — no —
'Tis no dishonour to have loved this man.
I almost wish now, what I never wish'd
Before, that he were Grecian. If Alcides
Were shamed in wearing Lydian Omphale's
She-garb ; and wielding her vile distaff, surely
He, who springs up a Hercules at once,

Nursed in effeminate arts from youth to manhood,
 And rushes from the banquet to the battle,
 As though it were a bed of love, deserves
 That a Greek girl should be his paramour,
 And a Greek bard his minstrel, a Greek tomb
 His monument. How goes the strife, sir?

Enter an Officer.

Officer. Lost,
 Lost almost past recovery. Zames! Where
 Is Zames?

Myr. Posted with the guard appointed
 To watch before the apartment of the women.

[*Exit Officer.*]

Myr. (sola). He's gone; and told no more than
 that all's lost!

What need have I to know more? In those words,
 Those little words, a kingdom and a king.
 A line of thirteen ages, and the lives
 Of thousands, and the fortune of all left
 With life, are merged; and I, too, with the great,
 Like a small bubble breaking with the wave
 Which bore it, shall be nothing. At the least,
 My fate is in my keeping: no proud victor
 Shall count me with his spoils.

Enter PANIA.

Pan. Away with me,
 Myrrha, without delay; we must not lose
 A moment — all that's left us now.

Myr. The king?

Pan. Sent me here to conduct you hence, beyond
 The river, by a secret passage.

Myr. Then
 He lives —

Pon. And charged me to secure your life;
And beg you to live on for his sake, till
He can rejoin you.

Myr. Will he then give way ?

Pan. Not till the last. Still, still he does whate'er
Despair can do ; and step by step disputes
The very palace.

Myr. They are here, then : — ay,
Their shouts come ringing through the ancient halls,
Never profaned by rebel echoes till
This fatal night. Farewell, Assyria's line !
Farewell to all of Nimrod ! Even the name
Is now no more.

Pan. Away with me — away !

Myr. No : I'll die here ! — Away, and tell your
king
I loved him to the last.

Enter SARDANAPALUS and SALEMENES with Soldiers.

PANIA quits MYRRHA, and ranges himself with them.

Sar. Since it is thus,
We'll die where we were born — in our own halls.
Serry your ranks — stand firm. I have despatch'd
A trusty satrap for the guard of Zames,
All fresh and faithful ; they'll be here anon.
All is not over. — Pania, look to Myrrha.

[*PANIA returns towards MYRRHA.*

Sal. We have breathing time ; yet once more charge,
my friends —
One for Assyria !

Sar. Rather say for Bactria !
My faithful Bactrians, I will henceforth be
King of your nation, and we'll hold together
This realm as province.

Sal. Hark ! they come — they come.

Enter BELESES and ARBACES with the Rebels.

Arb. Set on, we have them in the toil. Charge!
charge! [— On!

Bel. On! on! — Heaven fights for us, and with us
[*They charge the King and SALEMENES with their
Troops, who defend themselves till the Arrival of
ZAMES with the Guard before mentioned. The
Rebels are then driven off, and pursued by SALE-
MENES, &c. As the King is going to join the
pursuit, BELESES crosses him.*

Bel. Ho! tyrant — I will end this war.

Sar.

Ever. so

My warlike priest, and precious prophet, and
Grateful and trusty subject: yield, I pray thee.
I would reserve thee for a fitter doom,
Rather than dip my hands in holy blood.

Bel. Thine hour is come.

Sar.

No, thine. — I've lately read,
Though but a young astrologer, the stars;
And ranging round the zodiac, found thy fate
In the sign of the Scorpion, which proclaims
That thou wilt now be crush'd.

Bel.

But not by thee.

[*They fight; BELESES is wounded and disarmed.*

Sar. (raising his sword to despatch him, exclaims —
Now call upon thy planets, will they shoot
From the sky to preserve their seer and credit?

[*A party of Rebels enter and rescue BELESES. They
assail the King, who, in turn, is rescued by a
Party of his Soldiers, who drive the Rebels off.*

The villain was a prophet after all.

Upon them — ho! there — victory is ours.

[*Exit in pursuit.*

Myr. (to *Pan.*) Pursue! Why stand'st thou here,
and leavest the ranks

Of fellow-soldiers conquering without thee?

Pan. 'The king's command was not to quit thee.

Myr.

Me !

'Think not of me — a single soldier's arm
Must not be wanting now. I ask no guard,
I need no guard : what, with a world at stake,
Keep watch upon a woman ? Hence, I say,
Or thou art shamed ! Nay, then, *I* will go forth,
A feeble female, 'midst their desperate strife,
And bid thee guard me *there* — where thou shouldst
shield

Thy sovereign.

[*Exit MYRRHA.*

Pan. Yet stay, damsel ! — She's gone.
If aught of ill betide her, better I
Had lost my life. Sardanapalus holds her
Far dearer than his kingdom, yet he fights
For that too ; and can I do less than he,
Who never flash'd a scimitar till now ?
Myrrha, return, and I obey you, though
In disobedience to the monarch.

[*Exit PANIA.*

Enter ALTADA and SFERO by an opposite door.

Alt.

Myrrha !

What, gone ? yet she was here when the fight raged,
And Pania also. Can aught have befallen them ?

Sfe. I saw both safe, when late the rebels fled :
They probably are but retired to make
Their way back to the harem.

Alt.

If the king

Prove victor, as it seems even now he must,
And miss his own Ionian, we are doom'd
To worse than captive rebels.

Sfe.

Let us trace them ;

She cannot be fled far ; and, found, she makes
A richer prize to our soft sovereign
Than his recover'd kingdom.

Alt.

Baal himself

Ne'er fought more fiercely to win empire, than
His silken son to save it. he defies
All augury of foes or friends; and like
The close and sultry summer's day, which bodes
A twilight tempest, bursts forth in such thunder
As sweeps the air and deluges the earth.
The man's inscrutable.

Sfe.

Not more than others.

All are the sons of circumstance: away —
Let's seek the slave out, or prepare to be
Tortur'd for his infatuation, and
Condemn'd without a crime.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter SALEMENES and Soldiers, &c.

Sal.

The triumph is

Flattering: they are beaten backward from the palace,
And we have open'd regular access
To the troops station'd on the other side
Euphrates, who may still be true; nay, must be,
When they hear of our victory. But where
Is the chief victor? where's the king?

Enter SARDANAPALUS, cum suis, &c. and MYRRHA.

Sar.

Here, brother. ¹

Sal. Unhurt, I hope.

Sar.

Not quite; but let it pass.

We've clear'd the palace —

Sal.

And I trust the city.

Our numbers gather; and I've order'd onward
A cloud of Parthians, hitherto reserved,
All fresh and fiery, to be pour'd upon them
In their retreat, which soon will be a flight.

Sar. It is already, or at least they march'd

¹ [The king, by his daring valour, restores the fortune of the fight, and returns, with all his train, to the palace. The scene that ensues is very masterly and characteristic. — JEFFRAY.]

Faster than I could follow with my Bactrians,
Who spared no speed. I am spent : give me a seat.

Sal. There stands the throne, sire.

Sar. 'Tis no place to rest on,
For mind nor body : let me have a couch,

[*They place a seat.*]

A peasant's stool, I care not what : so — now
I breathe more freely.

Sal. This great hour has proved
The brightest and most glorious of your life.

Sar. And the most tiresome. Where's my cupbearer?
Bring me some water.

Sal. (smiling). 'Tis the first time he
Ever had such an order : even I,
Your most austere of counsellors, would now
Suggest a purpler beverage.

Sar. Blood — doubtless.
But there's enough of that shed ; as for wine,
I have learn'd to-night the price of the pure element :
Thrice have I drank of it, and thrice renew'd,
With greater strength than the grape ever gave me,
My charge upon the rebels. Where's the soldier
Who gave me water in his helmet ?

One of the Guards. Slain, sire !
An arrow pierc'd his brain, while, scattering
The last drops from his helm, he stood in act
To place it on his brows.

Sar. Slain ! unrewarded !
And slain to serve my thirst : that's hard, poor slave !
Had he but lived, I would have gorged him with
Gold : all the gold of earth could ne'er repay
The pleasure of that draught ; for I was parch'd
As I am now. [*They bring water — he drinks.*]

I live again — from henceforth
The goblet I reserve for hours of love,
But war on water.

Sal. And that bandage, sire,
Which girds your arm?

Sar. A scratch from brave Beleses.

Myr. Oh ! he is wounded !

Sar. Not too much of that ;
And yet it feels a little stiff and painful,
Now I am cooler.

Myr. You have bound it with ——

Sar. The fillet of my diadem : the first time
That ornament was ever aught to me,
Save an incumbrance.

Myr. (*to the Attendants*). Summon speedily
A leech of the most skilful : pray, retire :
I will unbind your wound and tend it.

Sar. Do so,
For now it throbs sufficiently : but what
Know'st thou of wounds ? yet wherefore do I ask ?
Know'st thou, my brother, where I lighted on
This minion ?

Sal. Herding with the other females,
Like frighten'd antelopes.

Sar. No : like the dam
Of the young lion, femininely raging,
(And femininely meaneth furiously,
Because all passions in excess are female,)
Against the hunter flying with her cub,
She urged on with her voice and gesture, and
Her floating hair and flashing eyes, the soldiers,
In the pursuit.

Sal. Indeed !

Sar. You see, this night
Made warriors of more than me. I paused
To look upon her, and her kindled cheek ;
Her large black eyes, that flash'd through her long hair
As it stream'd o'er her ; her blue veins that rose
Along her most transparent brow ; her nostril

Dilated from its symmetry ; her lips
 Apart ; her voice that clove through all the din,
 As a lute pierceth through the cymbal's clash,
 Jar'd but not drown'd by the loud brattling ; her
 Waved arms, more dazzling with their own born whiteness

Than the steel her hand held, which she caught up
 From a dead soldier's grasp ; — all these things made
 Her seem unto the troops a propheticess of
 Victory, or Victory herself,
 Come down to hail us hers.

Sal. (aside). This is too much.
 Again the love-fit's on him, and all's lost
 Unless we turn his thoughts.

(Aloud). But pray thee, sire,
 Think of your wound — you said even now 't was
 painful.

Sar. That's true, too ; but I must not think of it.

Sal. I have look'd to all things needful, and will now
 Receive reports of progress made in such
 Orders as I had given, and then return
 To hear your further pleasure.

Sar. Be it so.

Sal. (in retiring). Myrrha !

Myr. Prince !

Sal. You have shown a soul to-night,
 Which, were he not my sister's lord . . . But now
 I have no time : thou lovest the king ?

Myr. I love

Sardanapalus.

Sal. But wouldst have him king still ?

Myr. I would not have him less than what he
 should be.

Sal. Well then, to have him king, and yours, and all
 He should, or should not be ; to have him *live*,
 Let him not sink back into luxury.

You have more power upon his spirit than
 Wisdom within these walls, or fierce rebellion
 Raging without: look well that he relapse not.

Myr. There needed not the voice of Salemenes
 To urge me on to this: I will not fail.
 All that a woman's weakness can —

Sal. Is power
 Omnipotent o'er such a heart as his:
 Exert it wisely. [*Exit SALEMENES.*]

Sar. Myrrha! what, at whispers
 With my stern brother? I shall soon be jealous.¹

Myr. (smiling). You have cause, sire; for on the
 earth there breathes not

A man more worthy of a woman's love —
 A soldier's trust — a subject's reverence —
 A king's esteem — the whole world's admiration!

Sar. Praise him, but not so warmly. I must not
 Hear those sweet lips grow eloquent in aught
 That throws me into shade! yet you speak truth.

Myr. And now retire, to have your wound look'd to.
 Pray, lean on me.

Sar. Yes, love! but not from pain.
[*Exeunt omnes.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

SARDANAPALUS *discovered sleeping upon a Couch, and occasionally disturbed in his slumbers, with MYRRHA watching.*

Myr. (sola, gazing). I have stolen upon his rest, if
 rest it be,

¹ [The rebels are at length repulsed. The king re-enters

Which thus convulses slumber : shall I wake him ?
 No, he seems calmer. Oh, thou God of Quiet !
 Whose reign is o'er scaled eyelids and soft dreams,
 Or deep, deep sleep, so as to be unfathom'd,
 Look like thy brother, Death, -- so still -- so stirless --
 For then we are happiest, as it may be, we
 Are happiest of all within the realm
 Of thy stern, silent, and unawakening twin.
 Again he moves -- again the play of pain
 Shoots o'er his features, as the sudden gust
 Crisps the reluctant lake that lay so calm ¹
 Beneath the mountain shadow ; or the blast
 Ruffles the autumn leaves, that drooping cling
 Faintly and motionless to their loved boughs.
 I must awake him -- yet not yet : who knows
 From what I rouse him ? It seems pain ; but if
 I quicken him to heavier pain ? The fever
 Of this tumultuous night, the grief too of
 His wound, though slight, may cause all this, and shake
 Me more to see than him to suffer. No :
 Let Nature use her own maternal means, --
 And I await to second, not disturb her. ²

Sar. (awakening). Not so -- although ye multiplied
 the stars,

wounded, and retires to rest, after a short and very characteristic conversation between Salemenes and Myrrha, in which the two kindred spirits show their mutual understanding of each other, and the loyal warrior, postponing all the selfish domestic feelings which led him to dislike the fair Ionian, exhorts her to use her utmost power to keep her lover from relaxing into luxury. The transient effect which their whispers produce on Sardanapalus is well imagined. — *HEBER.*]

¹ ["Crisps the unswelling wave," &c. — *MS.*]

² [The fourth Act opens with Myrrha watching over the slumbers of Sardanapalus. He awakens and tells a horrid dream, which we do not much admire, except that part of it which describes the form of his warlike ancestress Semiramis, with whom, and the rest of his regal predecessors, he had fancied himself at a ghostly banquet. — *HEBER.*]

And gave them to me as a realm to share
From you and with you ! I would not so purchase
The empire of eternity. Hence — hence —
Old hunter of the earliest brutes ¹ and ye,
Who hunted fellow-creatures as if brutes !
Once bloody mortals — and now bloodier idols,
If your priests lie not ! And thou, ghastly beldame !
Dripping with dusky gore, and trampling on
The carcasses of Inde — away ! away !
Where am I ? Where the spectres ? Where ——
No — that

Is no false phantom . I should know it 'midst
All that the dead dare gloomily raise up
From their black gulf to daunt the living. Myrrha !
Myr. Alas ! thou art pale, and on thy brow the drops
Gather like night dew. My beloved, hush —
Calm thee. Thy speech seems of another world,
And thou art lord of this. Be of good cheer ;
All will go well.

Sar. Thy *hand* — so — 't is thy hand ;
'T is flesh ; grasp — clasp — yet closer, till I feel
Myself that which I was.

Myr. At least know me
For what I am, and ever must be — thine.

Sar. I know it now. I know this life again.
Ah, Myrrha ! I have been where we shall be.

Myr. My lord !

Sar. I've been i' the grave — where worms are lords,
And kings are —— But I did not deem it so ;
I thought 't was nothing.

Myr. So it is ; except
Unto the timid, who anticipate
That which may never be.¹

¹ [The general tone of Myrrha's character (In perfect consistency with the manners of her age and nation, and with her own elevated but pure and feminine spirit,) is that of a devout wou-

Sar. Oh, Myrrha ! if
Sleep shows such things, what may not death disclose ?

Myr. I know no evil death can show, which life
Has not already shown to those who live
Embodied longest. If there be indeed
A shore where mind survives, 't will be as mind,
All unincorporate : or if there flits

happier of her country's gods. She reproves, with dignity, the unprincipled flattery of the Assyrian courtiers and the libertine scoffs of the king. She does not forget, while preparing for death, that libation which was the latest and most solemn act of Grecian piety ; and she, more particularly, expresses her belief in a future state of existence. Yet this very Myrrha, when Sardanapalus is agitated by his evil dream, and by the natural doubt as to what worse visions death may bring, is made to console him, in the strain of his own Epicurean philosophy, with the doctrine that death is really nothing, except

“ Unto the timid who anticipate
That which may never be,”

and with the insinuation that all which remains of “ the dead is the dust we tread upon.” We do not wish to ask, we do not like to conjecture, *whose* sentiments these are, but they are certainly not the sentiments of an ancient Grecian heroine. They are not the sentiments which Myrrha might have learned from the heroes of her native land or from the poems whence those heroes derived their heroism, then contempt of death, “ and their love of virtue.” Myrrha would rather have told her lover of those happy islands where the benevolent and the brave reposed after the toils of their mortal existence ; of that venerable society of departed warriors and sages to which, if he renounced his sloth and lived for his people and for glory, he might yet expect admission. She would have told him of that joy with which his warlike ancestors would move along their meads of asphodel, when the news reached them of their descendant's prowess ; she would have anticipated those songs which denied that “ Harmodius was dead,” however he might be removed from the sphere of mortality ; which told her countrymen of the “ roses and the golden-fruited bowers, where, beneath the light of a lower sun, departed warriors reined their shadowy cars, or struck their harps amid altars steaming with frankincense.” (Hom. Odyss. λ. 539. Callistratus ap. Athenæum, l. xv. Pindar. Fragm. Heyne, vol. iii. p. 31.) Such were the doctrines which naturally led men to a contempt for life and a thirst for glory : but the opposite opinions were the doubts of a later day ; and of those sophists under whose influence Greece soon ceased to be free, or valiant, or virtuous.”—BISHOP HEBER.]

A shadow of this cumbrous clog of clay,
Which stalks, methinks, between our souls and heaven,
And fetters us to earth — at least the phantom,
Whate'er it have to fear, will not fear death.

Sar. I fear it not ; but I have felt — have seen —
A legion of the dead.

Myr. And so have I.
The dust we tread upon was once alive,
And wretched. But proceed : what hast thou seen ?
Speak it, 'twill lighten thy dimm'd mind.

Sar. Methought —

Myr. Yet pause, thou art tired — in pain — exhausted ; all
Which can impair both strength and spirit : seek
Rather to sleep again.

Sar. Not now — I would not
Dream ; though I know it now to be a dream
What I have dreamt : — and canst thou bear to hear it ?

Myr. I can bear all things, dreams of life or death,
Which I participate with you in semblance
Or full reality.

Sar. And this look'd real,
I tell you : after that these eyes were open,
I saw them in their flight — for then they fled.

Myr. Say on.

Sar. I saw, that is, I dream'd myself
Here — here — even where we are, guests as we were,
Myself a host that deem'd himself but guest,
Willing to equal all in social freedom ;
But, on my right hand and my left, instead
Of thee and Zames, and our custom'd meeting,
Was ranged on my left hand a haughty, dark,
And deadly face — I could not recognise it,
Yet I had seen it, though I knew not where :
The features were a giant's, and the eye
Was still, yet lighted ; his long locks curl'd down

On his vast bust, whence a huge quiver rose
With shaft-heads feather'd from the eagle's wing,¹
That peep'd up bristling through his serpent hair.
I invited him to fill the cup which stood
Between us, but he answer'd not — I fill'd it —
He took it not, but stared upon me, till
I trembled at the fix'd glare of his eye :
I frown'd upon him as a king should frown —
He frown'd not in his turn, but look'd upon me
With the same aspect, which appall'd me more,
Because it changed not ; and I turn'd for refuge
To milder guests, and sought them on the right,
Where thou wert wont to be. But ——

[*He pauses.*

Myr.

What instead ?

Sar. In thy own chair — thy own place in the
banquet —

I sought thy sweet face in the circle — but
Instead — a grey-hair'd, wither'd, bloody-eyed,
And bloody-handed, ghastly, ghostly thing,
Female in garb, and crown'd upon the brow,
Furrow'd with years, yet sneering with the passion
Of vengeance, leering too with that of lust,
Sate : — my veins curdled.

Myr.

Is this all ?

Sar.

Upon

Her right hand — her lank, bird-like, right hand —
stood

A goblet, bubbling o'er with blood ; and on
Her left, another, fill'd with — what I saw not,
But turn'd from it and her. But all along
The table sate a range of crowned wretches,
Of various aspects, but of one expression.

Myr. And felt you not this a mere vision ?

¹ [“With arrows peeping through his falling hair.” — MS.]

Sar.

No .

It was so palpable, I could have touch'd them.
I turn'd from one face to another, in
The hope to find at last one which I knew
Ere I saw theirs : but no — all turn'd upon me,
And stared, but neither ate nor drank, but stared,
Till I grew stone, as they seem'd half to be,
Yet breathing stone, for I felt life in them,
And life in me : there was a horrid kind
Of sympathy between us, as if they
Had lost a part of death to come to me,
And I the half of life to sit by them.
We were in an existence all apart
From heaven or earth — And rather let me see
Death all than such a being !

Myr.

And the end ?

Sar. At last I sate, marble, as they, when rose
The hunter and the crone ; and smiling on me —
Yes, the enlarged but noble aspect of
The hunter smiled upon me — I should say,
His lips, for his eyes moved not — and the woman's
Thin lips relax'd to something like a smile.
Both rose, and the crown'd figures on each hand
Rose also, as if aping their chief shades —
Mere mimics even in death — but I sate still :
A desperate courage crept through every limb,
And at the last I fear'd them not, but laugh'd
Full in their phantom faces. But then — then
The hunter laid his hand on mine : I took it,
And grasp'd it — but it melted from my own ;
While he too vanish'd, and left nothing but
The memory of a hero, for he look'd so.

Myr. And was : the ancestor of heroes, too,
And thine no less.

Sar. • Ay, Myrrha, but the woman,
The female, who remain'd, she flew upon me,

And burnt my lips up with her noisome kisses ;
And, flinging down the goblets on each hand,
Methought their poisons flow'd around us, till
Each form'd a hideous river. Still she clung ;
The other phantoms, like a row of statues,
Stood dull as in our temples, but she still
Embraced me, while I shrunk from her, as if,
In lieu of her remote descendant, I
Had been the son who slew her for her incest.
Then — then — a chaos of all loathsome things
Throng'd thick and shapeless : I was dead, yet
feeling —

Buried, and raised again — consumed by worms,
Purged by the flames, and wither'd in the air !
I can fix nothing further of my thoughts,
Save that I long'd for thee, and sought for thee,
In all these agonies, — and woke and found thee.

Myr. So shalt thou find me ever at thy side,
Here and hereafter, if the last may be.
But think not of these things — the mere creations
Of late events, acting upon a frame
Unused to toil, yet over-wrought by toil
Such as might try the sternest.

Sar. I am better.
Now that I see *thee* once more, *what was seen*
Seems nothing.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. Is the king so soon awake ?

Sar. Yes, brother, and I would I had not slept ;
For all the predecessors of our line
Rose up, methought, to drag me down to them.
My father was amongst them, too ; but he,
I know not why, kept from me, leaving me
Between the hunter-founder of our race,

And her, the homicide and husband-killer,
Whom you call glorious.

Sal. So I term you also,
Now you have shown a spirit like to hers.
By day-break I propose that we set forth,
And charge once more the rebel crew, who still
Keep gathering head, repulsed, but not quite quell'd.

Sar. How wears the night?

Sal. There yet remain some hours
Of darkness: use them for your further rest.

Sar. No, not to-night, if 't is not gone: methought
I pass'd hours in that vision.

Myr. Scarcely one;
I watch'd by you: it was a heavy hour,
But an hour only.

Sar. Let us then hold council;
To-morrow we set forth.

Sal. But ere that time,
I had a grace to seek.

Sar. 'T is granted.

Sal. Hear it
Ere you reply too readily; and 't is
For your ear only.

Myr. Prince, I take my leave.

[Exit MYRRHA.]

Sal. That slave deserves her freedom.

Sar. Freedom only!
That slave deserves to share a throne.

Sal. Your patience —
'T is not yet vacant, and 't is of its partner
I come to speak with you.

Sar. How! of the queen?

Sal. Even so. I judg'd it fitting for their safety,
That, ere the dawn, she sets forth with her children
For Paphlagonia, where our kinsman Cotta
Governs; and there at all events secure

My nephews and your sons their lives, and with them
Their just pretensions to the crown in case ——

Sar. I perish — as is probable : well thought —
Let them set forth with a sure escort.

Sal. That
Is all provided, and the galley ready
To drop down the Euphrates ;¹ but ere they
Depart, will you not see ——

Sar. My sons ? It may
Unman my heart, and the poor boys will weep ;
And what can I reply to comfort them,
Save with some hollow hopes, and ill-worn smiles ?
You know I cannot feign.

Sal. But you can feel !
At least, I trust so : in a word, the queen
Requests to see you ere you part — for ever.
Sar. Unto what end ? what purpose ? I will grant
Aught — all that she can ask — but such a meeting.

Sal. You know, or ought to know, enough of
women,
Since you have studied them so steadily,
That what they ask in aught that touches on
The heart, is dearer to their feelings or
Their fancy, than the whole external world.
I think as you do of my sister's wish ;
But 't was her wish — she is my sister — you
Her husband — will you grant it ?

Sar. 'Twill be useless :
But let her come.

Sal. I go. [*Exit SALEMENES.*

¹ [We hardly know why Lord Byron, who has not in other respects shown a slavish deference for Diodorus Siculus, should thus follow him in the manifest geographical blunder of placing Nineveh on the *Euphrates* instead of the *Tigris*, in opposition not only to the uniform tradition of the East, but to the express assertions of Herodotus, Pliny, and Ptolemy — HEBER]

Sar. We have lived asunder
Too long to meet again — and *now* to meet!
Have I not cares enow, and pangs enow,
To bear alone, that we must mingle sorrows,
Who have ceased to mingle love?

Re-enter SALEMENES and ZARINA.

Sal. My sister! Courage.
Shame not our blood with trembling, but remember
From whence we sprung. The queen is present, sire.

Zar. I pray thee, brother, leave me.

Sal. Since you ask it.
[*Exit SALEMENES.*

Zar. Alone with him! How many a year has pass'd,
Though we are still so young, since we have met,
Which I have worn in widowhood of heart.
He loved me not: yet he seems little chang'd —
Changed to me only — would the change were mutual!
He speaks not — scarce regards me — not a word —
Nor look — yet he *was* soft of voice and aspect,
Indifferent, not austere. My lord!

Sar. Zarina!

Zar. No, *not* Zarina — do not say Zarina.
That tone — that word — annihilate long years,
And things which make them longer.

Sar. 'Tis too late
To think of these past dreams. Let's not reproach —
That is, reproach me not — for the *last* time —

Zar. And *first*. I ne'er reproach'd you.

Sar. 'Tis most true;
And that reproof comes heavier on my heart
Than — But our hearts are not in our own power.
Nor hands; but I gave both.

Sar. Your brother said
It was your will to see me, ere you went
From Nineveh with — (*He hesitates*).

Zar. Our children : it is true.
I wish'd to thank you that you have not divided
My heart from all that 's left it now to love —
Those who are yours and mine, who look like you,
And look upon me as you look'd upon me
Once — — But they have not changed.

Sar. Nor ever will.
I fain would have them dutiful.

Zar. I cherish
Those infants, not alone from the blind love
Of a fond mother, but as a fond woman.
They are now the only tie between us.

Sar. Decm not
I have not done you justice : rather make them
Resemble your own line than their own sire.
I trust them with you — to you : fit them for
A throne, or, if that be denied —— You have heard
Of this night's tumults ?

Zar. I had half forgotten,
And could have welcomed any grief save yours,
Which gave me to behold your face again.

Sar. The throne — I say it not in fear — but 't is
In peril : they perhaps may never mount it :
But let them not for this lose sight of it.
I will dare all things to bequesth it them ;
But if I fail, then they must win it back
Bravely — and, won, wear it wisely, not as I
Have wasted down my royalty.

Zar. They ne'er
Shall know from me of aught but what may honour
Their father's memory.

Sar. Rather let them hear
The truth from you than from a trampling world.
If they be in adversity, they 'll learn
Too soon the scorn of crowds for crownless princes,

And find that all their father's sins are theirs.
My boys! — I could have borne it were I childless.

Zar. Oh! do not say so — do not poison all
My peace left, by unwishing that thou wert
A father. If thou conquerest, they shall reign,
And honour him who saved the realm for them,
So little cared for as his own; and if ——

Sar. 'Tis lost, all earth will cry out, thank your father
And they will swell the echo with a curse.

Zar. That they shall never do; but rather honour
The name of him, who, dying like a king,
In his last hours did more for his own memory
Than many monarchs in a length of days,
Which date the flight of time, but make no annals.

Sar. Our annals draw perchance unto their close;
But at the least, whate'er the past, their end
Shall be like their beginning — memorable.

Zar. Yet be not rash — be careful of your life,
Live but for those who love.

Sar. And who are they?
A slave, who loves from passion — I'll not say
Ambition — she hath seen thrones shake, and loves;
A few friends who have revell'd till we are
As one, for they are nothing if I fall;
A brother I have injured — children whom
I have neglected, and a spouse ——

Zar. Who loves.

Sar. And pardons?

Zar. I have never thought of this,
And cannot pardon till I have condemn'd.

Sar. My wife!

Zar. Now blessings on thee for that word!
• I never thought to hear it more — from thee.

Sar. Oh! thou wilt hear it from my subjects. Yes —
These slaves whom I have nurtured, pamper'd, fed,
And swoln with peace, and gorged with plenty, till

They reign themselves — all monarchs in their man-
sions —

Now swarm forth in rebellion, and demand
His death, who made their lives a jubilee ;
While the few upon whom I have no claim
Are faithful ! This is true, yet monstrous.

Zar.

'Tis

Perhaps too natural ; for benefits
Turn poison in bad minds.

Sar.

And good ones make

Good out of evil. Happier than the bee,
Which hives not but from wholesome flowers.

Zar.

Then reap

The honey, nor inquire whence 't is derived.
Be satisfied — you are not all abandon'd.

Sar. My life insures me that. How long, bethink you,
Were not I yet a king, should I be mortal ;
'That is, where mortals *are*, not where they must be ?

Zar. I know not. But yet live for my — that is,
Your children's sake !

Sar.

My gentle, wrong'd Zarina !¹

I am the very slave of circumstance
And impulse — borne away with every breath !
Misplaced upon the throne — misplaced in life.
I know not what I could have been, but feel

¹ [We are not sure, whether there is not a considerable violation of costume in the sense of degradation with which Myrrha seems to regard her situation in the harem, no less than in the resentment of Salemenes, and the remorse of Sardanapalus on the score of his infidelity to Zarina. Little as we know of the domestic habits of Assyria, we have reason to conclude, from the habits of contemporary nations, and from the manners of the East in every age, that polygamy was neither accounted a crime in itself, nor as a measure of which the principal wife was justified in complaining. And even in Greece, in those times when Myrrha's character must have been formed, — to be a captive, and subject to the captor's pleasure, was accounted a misfortune indeed, but could hardly be regarded as an infamy. But where is the critic who would object to an inaccuracy which has given occasion to such sentiments and such poetry ? — BISHOP HEBLER.]

I am not what I should be -- let it end.
But take this with thee: if I was not form'd
To prize a love like thine, a mind like thine,
Nor dote even on thy beauty — as I've doted
On lesser charms, for no cause save that such
Devotion was a duty, and I hated
All that look'd like a chain for me or others
(This even rebellion must avouch); yet hear
These words, perhaps among my last — that none
E'er valued more thy virtues, though he knew not
To profit by them — as the miner lights
Upon a vein of virgin ore, discovering
That which avails him nothing: he hath found it,
But 't is not his — but some superior's, who
Placed him to dig, but not divide the wealth
Which sparkles at his feet; nor dare he lift
Nor poise it, but must grovel on, upturning
The sullen earth.

Zar. Oh! if thou hast at length
Discover'd that my love is worth esteem,
I ask no more — but let us hence together,
And I — let me say *we* — shall yet be happy.
Assyria is not all the earth — we'll find
A world out of our own — and be more bless'd
Than I have ever been, or thou, with all
An empire to indulge thee.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. I must part ye —
The moments, which must not be lost, are passing.
Zar. Inhuman brother! wilt thou thus weigh out
Instants so high and blest?
Sal. Blest!
Zar. He hath been
So gentle with me, that I cannot think
Of quitting.

Sal. So — this feminine farewell
Ends as such partings end, in *no* departure.
I thought as much, and yielded against all
My better bodings. But it must not be.

Zar. Not be?

Sal. Remain, and perish —

Zar. With my husband —

Sal. And children.

Zar. Alas!

Sal. Hear me, sister, like
My sister : — all 's prepared to make your safety
Certain, and of the boys too, our last hopes ;
'T is not a single question of mere feeling,
Though that were much — but 't is a point of state !
The rebels would do more to seize upon
The offspring of their sovereign, and so crush —

Zar. Ah ! do not name it.

Sal. Well, then, mark me · when
They are safe beyond the Median's grasp, the rebels
Have miss'd their chief aim — the extinction of
The line of Nimrod. Though the present king
Fall, his sons live for victory and vengeance.

Zar. But could not I remain, alone?

Sal. What ! leave
Your children, with two parents and yet orphans —
In a strange land — so young, so distant ?

Zar. No —
My heart will break.

Sal. Now you know all — decide.

Sar. Zarina, he hath spoken well, and we
Must yield awhile to this necessity.
Remaining here, you may lose all ; departing,
You save the better part of what is left,
To both of us, and to such loyal hearts
As yet beat in these kingdoms.

Sal. The time presses.

Sar. Go, then. If e'er we meet again, perhaps
 I may be worthier of you — and, if not,
 Remember that my faults, though not atoned for,
 Are ended. Yet, I dread thy nature will
 Grieve more above the blighted name and ashes
 Which once were mightiest in Assyria — than ——
 But I grow womanish again, and must not ;
 I must learn sternness now. My sins have all
 Been of the softer order —— *hide* thy tears —
 I do not bid thee *not* to shed them — 't were
 Easier to stop Euphrates at its source
 Than one tear of a true and tender heart —
 But let me not behold them ; they unman me
 Here when I had remann'd myself. My brother
 Lead her away.

Zar. Oh, God ! I never shall
 Behold him more ! [obey'd.

Sal. (*striving to conduct her*). Nay, sister, I *must* be

Zar. I must remain — away ! you shall not hold me.
 What, shall he die alone ? — *I* live alone ?

Sal. He shall *not die alone* , but lonely you
 Have lived for years.

Zar. That 's false ! I knew *he* lived,
 And lived upon his image — let me go !

Sal. (*conducting her off the stage*). Nay, then, I
 must use some fraternal force,
 Which you will pardon.

Zar. Never. Help me ! Oh !
 Sardanapalus, wilt thou thus behold me
 Torn from thee ?

Sal. Nay — then all is lost again,
 If that this moment is not gain'd.

Zar. My brain turns —
 My eyes fail — where is he ? [*She faints.*

Sar. (*advancing*). No — set her down —
 She's dead — and you have slain her.

Sal. 'Tis the mere
Faintness of o'erwrought passion : in the air
She will recover. Pray, keep back. — [*Aside.*] I must
Avail myself of this sole moment to
Bear her to where her children are embark'd,
I' the royal galley on the river.

[*SALEMENES bears her off.*¹

Sar. (solus). This, too —
And this too must I suffer — I, who never
Inflicted purposely on human hearts
A voluntary pang ! But that is false —
She loved me, and I loved her. — Fatal passion !
Why dost thou not expire *at once* in hearts
Which thou hast lighted up at once ? Zarina !
I must pay dearly for the desolation
Now brought upon thee. Had I never loved
But thee, I should have been an unopposed
Monarch of honouring nations. To what gulfs
A single deviation from the track
Of human duties leads even those who claim
The homage of mankind as their born due,
And find it, till they forfeit it themselves !

Enter MYRRHA.

Sar. You here ! Who call'd you ?

Myr. No one — but I heard
Far off a voice of wail and lamentation,
And thought —

¹ [This scene has been, by the Edinburgh reviewers, we know not why, called "useless," "unnatural," and "tediously written." For ourselves, we are not ashamed to own that we have read it with emotion. It is an interview between Sardanapalus and his neglected wife, whom, with her children, he is about to send to a place of safety. Here, too, however, he is represented, with much poetical art and justice of delineation, as, in the midst of his deepest regrets for Zarina, chiefly engrossed with himself and his own sorrows, and inclined, immediately afterwards, to visit on poor Myrrha the painful feelings which his own reproaches of himself have occasioned. — *HEBER.*]

Sar. It forms no portion of your duties
To enter here till sought for.

Myr. Though I might,
Perhaps, recall some softer words of yours
(Although they *too were chiding*), which reproved me,
Because I ever dreaded to intrude ;
Resisting my own wish and your injunction
To heed no time nor presence, but approach you
Uncall'd for : — I retire.

Sar. Yet stay — being here.
I pray you pardon me : events have soured me
Till I wax pceevish — heed it not : I shall
Soon be myself again.

Myr. I wait with patience,
What I shall see with pleasure.

Sar. Scarce a moment
Before your entrance in this hall, Zarina,
Queen of Assyria, departed hence.

Myr. Ah !

Sar. Wherefore do you start ?

Myr. Did I do so ?

Sar. 'T was well you enter'd by another portal,
Else you had met. That pang at least is spared her !

Myr. I know to feel for her.

Sar. That is too much,
And beyond nature — 't is nor mutual ¹
Nor possible. You cannot pity her,
Nor she ought but —

Myr. Despise the favourite slave ?
Not more than I have ever scorn'd myself.

Sar. Scorn'd ! what, to be the envy of your sex,
And lord it o'er the heart of the world's lord ?

Myr. Were you the lord of twice ten thousand
worlds —

¹ [For *mutual*, the MS. has *natural* ; but we are not quite sure that there has been merely a misprint in the foregoing editions.]

As you are like to lose the one you sway'd —
I did abase myself as much in being
Your paramour, as though you were a peasant —
Nay, more, if that the peasant were a Greek.

Sar. You talk it well —

Myr. And truly.

Sar. In the hour

Of man's adversity all things grow daring
Against the falling; but as I am not
Quite fall'n, nor now disposed to bear reproaches,
Perhaps because I merit them too often,
Let us then part while peace is still between us.

Myr. Part!

Sar. Have not all past human beings parted,
And must not all the present one day part?

Myr. Why?

Sar. For your safety, which I will have look'd to,
With a strong escort to your native land;
And such gifts, as, if you had not been all
A queen, shall make your dowry worth a kingdom.

Myr. I pray you talk not thus.

Sar. The queen is gone;
You need not shame to follow. I would fall
Alone — I seek no partners but in pleasure.

Myr. And I no pleasure but in parting not.
You shall not force me from you.

Sar. Think well of it —
It soon may be too late.

Myr. So let it be;
For then you cannot separate me from you.

Sar. And will not; but I thought you wish'd it.

Myr. I!

Sar. You spoke of your abasement.

Myr. And I feel it
Deeply — more deeply than all things but love.

Sar. Then fly from it.

Myr. 'T will not recal the past —
'T will not restore my honour, nor my heart.
No — here I stand or fall. If that you conquer,
I live to joy in your great triumph: should
Your lot be different, I'll not weep, but share it.
You did not doubt me a few hours ago.

Sar. Your courage never — nor your love till now;
And none could make me doubt it save yourself.
Those words —

Myr. Were words. I pray you, let the proofs
Be in the past acts you were pleased to praise
This very night, and in my further bearing,
Beside, wherever you are borne by fate.

Sar. I am content: and, trusting in my cause,
Think we may yet be victors and return
To peace — the only victory I covet.
To me war is no glory — conquest no
Renown. To be forced thus to uphold my right
Sits heavier on my heart than all the wrongs
These men would bow me down with. Never, never
Can I forget this night, even should I live
To add it to the memory of others.
I thought to have made mine inoffensive rule
An era of sweet peace 'midst bloody annals,
A green spot amidst desert centuries,
On which the future would turn back and smile,
And cultivate, or sigh when it could not
Recal Sardanapalus' golden reign.
I thought to have made my realm a paradise,
And every moon an epoch of new pleasures.
I took the rabble's shouts for love — the breath
Of friends for truth — the lips of woman for
My only guerdon — so they are, my Myrrha:

[*He kisses her.*]

Kiss me. Now let them take my realm and life!
They shall have both, but never thee!

Myr. No, never !
Man may despoil his brother man of all
That's great or glittering — kingdoms fall — hosts
yield —
Friends fail — slaves fly — and all betray — and, more
Than all, the most indebted — but a heart
That loves without self-love ! 'T is here — now prove it.

Enter SALEMENES.

Sal. I sought you — How ! *she* here again ?

Sar. Return not
Now to reproof : methinks your aspect speaks
Of higher matter than a woman's presence.

Sal. The only woman, whom it much imports me
At such a moment now is safe in absence —
The queen's embark'd.

Sar. And well ? say that much.

Sal. Yes.
Her transient weakness has pass'd o'er ; at least,
It settled into tearless silence : her
Pale face and glittering eye, after a glance
Upon her sleeping children, were still fix'd
Upon the palace towers as the swift galley
Stole down the hurrying stream beneath the starlight ;
But she said nothing.

Sar. Would I felt no more
Than she has said !

Sal. 'T is now too late to feel !
Your feelings cannot cancel a sole pang :
To change them, my advices bring sure tidings
That the rebellious Medes and Chaldees, marshall'd
By their two leaders, are already up
In arms again ; and, serrying their ranks,
Prepare to attack : they have apparently
Been join'd by other satraps.

Sar. What ! more rebels ?
Let us be first, then.

Sal. That were hardly prudent
Now, though it was our first intention. If
By noon to-morrow we are join'd by those
I've sent for by sure messengers, we shall be
In strength enough to venture an attack,
Ay, and pursuit too ; but, till then, my voice
Is to await the onset.

Sar. I detest
That waiting ; though it seems so safe to fight
Behind high walls, and hurl down foes into
Deep fosses, or behold them sprawl on spikes
Strew'd to receive them, still I like it not —
My soul seems lukewarm ; but when I set on them,
Though they were piled on mountains, I would have
A pluck at them, or perish in hot blood ! —
Let me then charge.

Sal. You talk like a young soldier.

Sar. I am no soldier, but a man : speak not
Of soldiership, I loathe the word, and those
Who pride themselves upon it ; but direct me
Where I may pour upon them.

Sal. You must spare
To expose your life too hastily ; 't is not
Like mine or any other subject's breath :
The whole war turns upon it — with it ; this
Alone creates it, kindles, and may quench it —
Prolong it — end it.

Sar. Then let us end both !
'T were better thus, perhaps, than prolong either ;
I'm sick of one, perchance of both.

[*A trumpet sounds without.*

Sal.

Hark !

Sar. Let us
Reply, not listen.

Sal. And your wound !

Sar. 'T is bound —
 'T is heal'd — I had forgotten it. Away !
 A leech's lancet would have scratch'd me deeper ;¹
 The slave that gave it might be well ashamed
 To have struck so weakly.

Sal. Now, may none this hour
 Strike with a better aim !

Sar. Ay, if we conquer ;
 But if not, they will only leave to me
 A task they might have spared their king. Upon
 them ! [*Trumpet sounds again.*

Sal. I am with you.

Sar. Ho, my arms ! again, my arms !
 [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The same Hall in the Palace.

MYRRHA and BALEA.

Myr. (at a window). The day at last has broken.
 What a night

Hath usher'd it ! How beautiful in heaven !
 Though varied with a transitory storm,
 More beautiful in that variety !
 How hideous upon earth ! where peace and hope,
 And love and revel, in an hour were trampled
 By human passions to a human chaos,
 Not yet resolved to separate elements —
 'T is warring still ! And can the sun so rise,
 So bright, so rolling back the clouds into

¹ [“A leech's lancet would have done as much” — MS.]

Vapours more lovely than the unclouded sky,
 With golden pinnacles, and snowy mountains,
 And billows purpler than the ocean's, making
 In heaven a glorious mockery of the earth,
 So like we almost deem it permanent ;
 So fleeting, we can scarcely call it aught
 Beyond a vision, 't is so transiently
 Scatter'd along the eternal vault : ¹ and yet
 It dwells upon the soul, and soothes the soul,
 And blends itself into the soul, until
 Sunrise and sunset form the haunted epoch
 Of sorrow and of love ; which they who mark not
 Know not the realms where those twin genii ²
 (Who chasten and who purify our hearts,
 So that we would not change their sweet rebukes
 For all the boisterous joys that ever shook
 The air with clamour) build the palaces
 Where their fond votaries repose and breathe
 Briefly ; — but in that brief cool calm inhale
 Enough of heaven to enable them to bear
 The rest of common, heavy, human hours,
 And dream them through in placid sufferance
 Though seemingly employ'd like all the rest
 Of toiling breathers in allotted tasks ³
 Of pain or pleasure, *two* names for *one* feeling,

¹ [This description of the sun rolling back the vapours is apparently imitated from a magnificent scene in the second book of Wordsworth's *Excursion* : —

——— "Round them and above,
 Glitter, with dark recesses interposed
 Casement, and cottage-roof, and stems of trees
 Half-veiled in vapouring cloud, the silver steam
 Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs
 By the strong sunbeams smitten."]

² ["Sunrise and sunset form the epoch of
 Sorrow and love ; and they who mark them not
 Can ne'er hold converse with," &c. — MS.]

³ ["Of labouring wretches in allotted tasks." — MS.]

Which our internal, restless agony
Would vary in the sound, although the sense
Escapes our highest efforts to be happy.

Bal. You muse right calmly : and can you so watch
The sunrise which may be our last ?

Myr. It is
Therefore that I so watch it, and reproach
Those eyes, which never may behold it more,
For having look'd upon it oft, too oft,
Without reverence and the rapture due
To that which keeps all earth from being as fragile
As I am in this form. Come, look upon it,
The Chaldee's god, which, when I gaze upon
I grow almost a convert to your Baal.

Bal. As now he reigns in heaven, so once on earth
He sway'd.

Myr. He sways it now far more, then ; never
Had earthly monarch half the power and glory
Which centres in a single ray of his.

Bal. Surely he is a god !

Myr. So we Greeks deem too
And yet I sometimes think that gorgeous orb
Must rather be the abode of gods than one
Of the immortal sovereigns. Now he breaks
Through all the clouds, and fills my eyes with light
That shuts the world out. I can look no more.

Bal. Hark ! heard you not a sound ?

Myr. No, 't was mere fancy ;
They battle it beyond the wall, and not
As in late midnight conflict in the very
Chambers : the palace has become a fortress
Since that insidious hour ; and here, within
The very centre, girded by vast courts
And regal halls of pyramid proportions,
Which must be carried one by one before •
They penetrate to where they then arrived,

We are as much shut in even from the sound
Of peril as from glory.

Bal. But they reach'd
Thus far before.

Myr. Yes, by surprise, and were
Beat back by valour : now at once we have
Courage and vigilance to guard us.

Bal. May they
Prosper !

Myr. That is the prayer of many, and
The dread of more : it is an anxious hour ;
I strive to keep it from my thoughts. Alas !
How vainly !

Bal. It is said the king's demeanour
In the late action scarcely more appall'd
The rebels than astonish'd his true subjects.

Myr. 'Tis easy to astonish or appal
The vulgar mass which moulds a horde of slaves ;
But he did bravely.

Bal. Slew he not Beleses ?
I heard the soldiers say he struck him down.

Myr. The wretch was overthrown, but rescued to
Triumph, perhaps, o'er one who vanquish'd him
In fight, as he had spared him in his peril ;
And by that heedless pity risk'd a crown.

Bal. Hark !

Myr. You are right ; some steps approach, but
slowly.

*Enter Soldiers, bearing in SALEMENES wounded, with a
broken javelin in his side : they seat him upon one of
the couches which furnish the Apartment.*

Myr. Oh, Jove !

Bal. Then all is over.

Sal. That is false.
Hew down the slave who says so, if a soldier.

Myr. Spare him — he's none: a mere court butterfly,

That flutters in the pageant of a monarch.

Sal. Let him live on, then.

Myr. So wilt thou, I trust.

Sal. I fain would live this hour out, and the event,
But doubt it. Wherefore did ye bear me here?

Sol. By the king's order. When the javelin struck
you,

You fell and fainted: 't was his strict command
To bear you to this hall.

Sal. 'T was not ill done:

For seeming slain in that cold dizzy trance,
The sight might shake our soldiers — but — 't is vain,
I feel it ebbing!

Myr. Let me see the wound;

I am not quite skillless: in my native land

'T is part of our instruction. War being constant,
We are nerved to look on such things.¹

Sol.

Best extract

The javelin.

Myr. Hold! no, no, it cannot be.

Sal. I am sped, then!

Myr. With the blood that fast must follow

The extracted weapon, I do fear thy life.

Sal. And I not death. Where was the king when
you

Convey'd me from the spot where I was stricken?

Sol. Upon the same ground, and encouraging
With voice and gesture the dispirited troops
Who had seen you fall, and falter'd back.

Sal.

Whom heard ye

Named next to the command?

Sol.

I did not hear.

Sal. Fly, then, and tell him, 't was my last request

¹ ["We are used to such inflictions." — M.S.]

That Zames take my post until the junction,
 So hoped for, yet delay'd, of Ofratanes,
 Satrap of Susa. Leave me here our troops
 Are not so numerous as to spare your absence.

Sol. But prince —

Sal. Hence, I say ! Here 's a courtier and
 A woman, the best chamber company.
 As you would not permit me to expire
 Upon the field, I'll have no idle soldiers
 About my sick couch. Hence ! and do my bidding !
[Exeunt the Soldiers.]

Myr. Gallant and glorious spirit ! must the earth
 So soon resign thee ?

Sal. Gentle Myrrha, 't is
 The end I would have chosen, had I saved
 The monarch or the monarchy by this ;
 As 't is, I have not outlived them.

Myr. You wax paler.

Sal. Your hand ; this broken weapon but prolongs
 My pangs, without sustaining life enough
 To make me useful : I would draw it forth
 And my life with it, could I but hear how
 The fight goes.

Enter SARDANAPALUS and Soldiers.

Sar. My best brother !

Sal. And the battle
 Is lost ?

Sar. *(despondingly).* You see me here.

Sal. I'd rather see you thus !
*[He draws out the weapon from the wound,
 and dies.]*

Sar. And thus I will be seen ; unless the succour,
 The last frail reed of our beleaguer'd hopes,
 Arrive with Ofratanes.

Myr. Did you not

Receive a token from your dying brother,
Appointing Zames chief?

Sar. I did.

Myr. Where 's Zames?

Sar. Dead.

Myr. And Altada?

Sar. Dying.

Myr. Pania? Sfero?

Sar. Pania yet lives; but Sfero's fled or captive.

I am alone.

Myr. And is all lost?

Sar. Our walls,

Though thinly mann'd, may still hold out against

Their present force, or aught save treachery:

But i' the field ——

Myr. I thought 't was the intent
Of Salemenes not to risk a sally

Till ye were strengthen'd by the expected succours.

Sar. I over-ruled him.

Myr. Well, the fault 's a brave one.

Sar. But fatal. Oh, my brother! I would give
These realms, of which thou wert the ornament,
The sword and shield, the sole-redeeming honour,
To call back —— But I will not weep for thee;
Thou shalt be mourn'd for as thou wouldst be mourn'd.

It grieves me most that thou couldst quit this life

Believing that I could survive what thou

Hast died for — our long royalty of race.

If I redeem it, I will give thee blood

Of thousands, tears of millions, for atonement

(The tears of all the good are thine already).

If not, we meet again soon, — if the spirit

Within us lives beyond: — thou readest mine,

And dost me justice now. Let me once clasp

That yet warm hand, and fold that throbbless heart

[*Embraces the body.*]

To this which beats so bitterly. Now, bear
The body hence.

Soldier. Where?

Sar. To my proper chamber.
Place it beneath my canopy, as though
The king lay there: when this is done, we will
Speak further of the rites due to such ashes.

[*Exeunt Soldiers with the body of SALEMENES.*]

Enter PANIA.

Sar. Well, Pania! have you placed the guards, and
issued
The orders fix'd on?

Pan. Sire, I have obey'd.

Sar. And do the soldiers keep their hearts up?

Pan. Sire?

Sar. I'm answer'd! When a king asks twice, and has
A question as an answer to *his* question,
It is a portent. What! they are dishearten'd?

Pan. The death of Salemenes, and the shouts
Of the exulting rebels on his fall,
Have made them ——

Sar. *Rage* — not droop — it should have been.
We'll find the means to rouse them.

Pan. Such a loss
Might sadden even a victory.

Sar. Alas!
Who can so feel it as I feel? but yet,
Though coop'd within these walls, they are strong, and
we

Have those without will break their way through hosts,
To make their sovereign's dwelling what it was —
A palace; not a prison, nor a fortress.

Enter an Officer, hastily.

Sar. Thy face seems ominous. Speak!

Offi.

I dare not.

Sar.

Dare not ?

While millions dare revolt with sword in hand !
That 's strange. I pray thee break that loyal silence
Which loathes to shock its sovereign ; we can hear
Worse than thou hast to tell.

Pan.

Proceed, thou hearest.

Offi. The wall which skirted near the river's brink
Is thrown down by the sudden inundation
Of the Euphrates, which now rolling, swoln
From the enormous mountains where it rises,
By the late rains of that tempestuous region,
O'erfloods its banks, and hath destroy'd the bulwark..

Pan. That 's a black augury ! it has been said
For ages, " That the city ne'er should yield
" To man, until the river grew its foe."

Sar. I can forgive the omen, not the ravage.
How much is swept down of the wall ?

Offi.

About

Some twenty stadii. ¹*Sar.*

And all this is left

Pervious to the assailants ?

Offi.

For the present

The river's fury must impede the assault ;
But when he shrinks into his wonted channel,
And may be cross'd by the accusom'd barks,
The palace is their own.

Sar.

That shall be never.

Though men, and gods, and elements, and omens,
Have risen up 'gainst one who ne'er provoked them,
My father's house shall never be a cave
For wolves to horde and howl in.

Pan.

With your sanction,

I will proceed to the spot, and take such measures

¹ About two miles and a half.

For the assurance of the vacant space
As time and means permit.

Sar. About it straight ;
And bring me back, as speedily as full
And fair investigation may permit,
Report of the true state of this irruption
Of waters. [*Exeunt PANIA and the Officer.*]

Myr. Thus the very waves rise up
Against you.

Sar. They are not my subjects, girl,
And may be pardon'd, since they can't be punish'd.

Myr. I joy to see this portent shakes you not.

Sar. I am past the fear of portents . they can tell me
Nothing I have not told myself since midnight .
Despair anticipates such things.

Myr. Despair !

Sar. No ; not despair precisely. When we know
All that can come, and how to meet it, our
Resolves, if firm, may merit a more noble
Word than this is to give it utterance.
But what are words to us ? we have well nigh done
With them and all things.

Myr. Save one deed — the last
And greatest to all mortals ; crowning act
Of all that was — or is — or is to be —
The only thing common to all mankind,
So different in their births, tongues, sexes, natures,
Hues, features, climes, times, feelings, intellects, ¹
Without one point of union save in this,
To which we tend, for which we 're born, and thread
The labyrinth of mystery, call'd life.

Sar. Our clew being well nigh wound out, let 's be
• cheerful.
They who have nothing more to fear may well

¹ [“ Complexions, climes, eraⁿ, and intellects.” — MS.]

Indulge a smile at that which once appall'd ;
As children at discover'd bugbears.

Re-enter PANIA.

Pan.

'T is

As was reported : I have order'd there
A double guard, withdrawing from the wall
Where it was strongest the required addition
To watch the breach occasion'd by the waters.

Sar. You have done your duty faithfully, and as
My worthy Pania ! further ties between us
Draw near a close. I pray you take this key :

[*Gives a key.*]

It opens to a secret chamber, placed
Behind the couch in my own chamber. (Now
Press'd by a nobler weight than e'er it bore —
Though a long line of sovereigns have lain down
Along its golden frame — as bearing for
A time what late was Salemenes.) Search
The secret covert to which this will lead you ;
'T is full of treasure ; ¹ take it for yourself
And your companions : there 's enough to load ye,
Though ye be many. ² Let the slaves be freed, too ;
And all the inmates of the palace, of
Whatever sex, now quit it in an hour.
Thence launch the regal barks, once form'd for pleasure,
And now to serve for safety, and embark.
The river 's broad and swoln, and uncommanded

¹ [“Athenæus makes these treasures amount to a thousand myriads of talents of gold, and ten times as many talents of silver, which is a sum that exceeds all credibility. A man is lost if he attempts to sum up the whole value ; which induces me to believe, that Athenæus must have very much exaggerated ; however, we may be assured, from his account, that the treasures were immensely great.” — ROLLIN.]

[—— “Ye will find the crevice
To which the key fits, with a little care.” — M.S.]

(More potent than a king) by these besiegers.
Fly! and be happy!

Pan. Under your protection!
So you accompany your faithful guard.

Sar. No, Pania! that must not be; get thee hence,
And leave me to my fate.

Pan. 'Tis the first time
I ever disobey'd; but now —

Sar. So all men
Dare heard me now, and Insolence within
Apes Treason from without. Question no further;
'Tis my command, my last command. Wilt *thou*
Oppose it? *thou*!

Pan. But yet — not yet.

Sar. Well, then,
Swear that you will obey when I shall give
The signal.

Pan. With a heavy but true heart,
I promise.

Sar. 'Tis enough. Now order here
Faggots, pine-nuts, and wither'd leaves, and such
Things as catch fire and blaze with one sole spark;
Bring cedar, too, and precious drugs, and spices,
And mighty planks, to nourish a tall pile;
Bring frankincense and myrrh, too, for it is
For a great sacrifice I build the pyre!
And heap them round yon throne.

Pan. My lord!

Sar. I have said it,
And *you* have sworn.

Pan. And could keep my faith
Without a vow. [Exit PANIA.

Myr. What mean you?

Sar. You shall know
Anon — what the whole earth shall ne'er forget.

PANIA, *returning with a Herald.*

Pan. My king, in going forth upon my duty,
This herald has been brought before me, craving
An audience.

Sar. Let him speak.

Her. The King Arbaces —

Sar. What, crown'd already? — But, proceed.

Her. Beleses,

The anointed high-priest —

Sar. Of what god or demon?
With new kings rise new altars. But, proceed;
You are sent to prate your master's will, and not
Reply to mine.

Her. And Satrap Ofratanes —

Sar. Why, he is ours.

Her. (*showing a ring.*) Be sure that he is now
In the camp of the conquerors; behold
His signet ring.

Sar. 'Tis his. A worthy triad!
Poor Salemenes! thou hast died in time
To see one treachery the less: this man
Was thy true friend and my most trusted subject.
Proceed.

Her. They offer thee thy life, and freedom
Of choice to single out a residence
In any of the further provinces,
Guarded and watch'd, but not confined in person,
Where thou shalt pass thy days in peace; but on
Condition that the three young princes are
Given up as hostages.

Sar. (*ironically.*) The generous victors!

Her. I wait the answer.

Sar. Answer, slave! How long
Have slaves decided on the doom of kings?

Her. Since they were free.

Sar. Mouthpiece of mutiny !
Thou at the least shalt learn the penalty
Of treason, though its proxy only. Pania !
Let his head be thrown from our walls within
The rebels' lines, his carcass down the river.
Away with him !

[PANIA and the Guards seizing him.]

Pan. I never yet obey'd
Your orders with more pleasure than the present.
Hence with him, soldiers ! do not soil this hall
Of royalty with treasonable gore ;
Put him to rest without.

Her. A single word :
My office, king, is sacred.

Sar. And what 's mine ?
That thou shouldst come and dare to ask of me
To lay it down ?

Her. I but obey'd my orders,
At the same peril if refused, as now
Incurr'd by my obedience.

Sar. So there are
New monarchs of an hour's growth as despotic
As sovereigns swathed in purple, and enthroned
From birth to manhood !

Her. My life waits your breath.
Yours (I speak humbly) — but it may be — yours
May also be in danger scarce less imminent :
Would it then suit the last hours of a line
Such as is that of Nimrod, to destroy
A peaceful herald, unarm'd, in his office ;
And violate not only all that man
Holds sacred between man and man — but that
More holy tie which links us with the gods ?

Sar. He's right. — Let him go free — My life's last act
Shall not be one of wrath. Here, fellow, take

[Gives him a golden cup from a table near.]

This golden goblet, let it hold your wine,
And think of *me*, or melt it into ingots,
And think of nothing but their weight and value.

Her. I thank you doubly for my life, and this
Most gorgeous gift, which renders it more precious.
But must I bear no answer?

Sar. Yes, — I ask
An hour's truce to consider.

Her. But an hour's?

Sar. An hour's: if at the expiration of
That time your masters hear no further from me,
They are to deem that I reject their terms,
And act befittingly.

Her. I shall not fail
To be a faithful legate of your pleasure.

Sar. And hark! a word more.

Her. I shall not forget it,
Whate'er it be.

Sar. Commend me to Beleses;
And tell him, ere a year expire, I summon
Him hence to meet me.

Her. Where?

Sar. At Babylon.
At least from thence he will depart to meet me.

Her. I shall obey you to the letter. [*Exit Herald.*]

Sar. Pania! —

Now, my good Pania! — quick — with what I order'd.

Pan. My lord, — the soldiers are already charged.
And see! they enter.

[*Soldiers enter, and form a Pile about the Throne, &c.*]

Sar. Higher, my good soldiers,
And thicker yet; and see that the foundation
Be such as will not speedily exhaust
Its own too subtle flame; nor yet be quench'd
With aught officious aid would bring to quell it.
Let the throne form the *core* of it; I would not

Leave that, save fraught with fire unquenchable,
To the new comers. Frame the whole as if
'T were to enkindle the strong tower of our
Inveterate enemies. Now it bears an aspect !
How say you, Pania, will this pile suffice
For a king's obsequies ?

Pan. Ay, for a kingdom's.

I understand you, now.

Sar. And blame me ?

Pan. No —

Let me but fire the pile, and share it with you.

Myr. That duty 's mine.

Pan. A woman's !

Myr. 'T is the soldier's

Part to die *for* his sovereign, and why not

The woman's with her lover ?

Pan. 'T is most strange !

Myr. But not so rare, my Pania, as thou think'st it.
In the mean time, live thou.—Farewell ! the pile
Is ready.

Pan. I should shame to leave my sovereign
With but a single female to partake
His death.

Sar. Too many far have heralded
Me to the dust, already. Get thee hence ;
Enrich thee.

Pan. And live wretched !

Sar. Think upon
Thy vow : — 't is sacred and irrevocable.

Pan. Since it is so, farewell.

Sar. Search well my chamber,
Feel no remorse at bearing off the gold ;
Remember, what you leave you leave the slaves
Who slew me : and when you have borne away
All safe off to your boats, blow one long blast
Upon the trumpet as you quit the palace.

The river's brink is too remote, its stream
Too loud at present to permit the echo
To reach distinctly from its banks. Then fly, —
And as you sail, turn back ; but still keep on
Your way along the Euphrates : if you reach
The land of Paphlagonia, where the queen
Is safe with my three sons in Cotta's court,
Say, what you *saw* at parting, and request
That she remember what I *said* at one
Parting more mournful still.

Pan. That royal hand !
Let me then once more press it to my lips ;
And these poor soldiers who throng round you, and
Would fain die with you !

[*The Soldiers and PANIA throng round him,
kissing his hand and the hem of his robe.*]

Sar. My best ! my last friends !
Let's not unman each other : part at once :
All farewells should be sudden, when for ever,
Else they make an eternity of moments,
And clog the last sad sands of life with tears.
Hence, and be happy : trust me, I am not
Now to be pitied ; or far more for what
Is past than present ; — for the future, 't is
In the hands of the deities, if such
There be : I shall know soon. Farewell — Farewell.

[*Exeunt PANIA and Soldiers.*]

Myr. These men were honest : it is comfort still
That our last looks should be on loving faces.

Sar. And *lovely* ones, my beautiful ! — but hear me !
If at this moment, — for we now are on
The brink, — thou feel'st an inward shrinking from
This leap through flame into the future, say it :
I shall not love thee less ; nay, perhaps more,
For yielding to thy nature : and there's time
Yet for thee to escape hence.

Myr. Shall I light
One of the torches which lie heap'd beneath
The ever-burning lamp that burns without,
Before Baal's shrine, in the adjoining hall?

Sar. Do so. Is that thy answer?

Myr.

Thou shalt see

[*Exit MYRRHA.*]

Sar. (solus). She's firm. My fathers! whom I will
rejoin,

It may be, purified by death from some
Of the gross stains of too material being,
I would not leave your ancient first abode
To the defilement of usurping bondmen;
If I have not kept your inheritance
As ye bequeath'd it, this bright part of it,
Your treasure, your abode, your sacred relics
Of arms, and records, monuments, and spoils,
In which *they* would have revell'd, I bear with me
To you in that absorbing element,
Which most personifies the soul as leaving
The least of matter unconsumed before
Its fiery workings. — and the light of this
Most royal of funereal pyres shall be
Not a mere pillar form'd of cloud and flame,
A beacon in the horizon for a day,
And then a mound of ashes, but a light
To lesson ages, rebel nations, and
Voluptuous princes. Time shall quench full many
A people's reecords, and a hero's acts;
Sweep empire after empire, like this first
Of empires, into nothing; but even then
Shall spare this deed of mine, and hold it up
•A problem few dare imitate, and none
Despise — but, it may be, avoid the life
Which led to such a consummation.

MYRRHA *returns with a lighted Torch in one Hand, and a Cup in the other.*

Myr. Lo!
I've lit the lamp which lights us to the stars.

Sar. And the cup?

Myr. 'Tis my country's custom to
Make a libation to the gods.

Sar. And mine
To make libations amongst men. I've not
Forgot the custom; and although alone,
Will drain one draught in memory of many
A joyous banquet past.

[SARDANAPALUS *takes the cup, and after drinking and tinkling the reversed cup, as a drop falls, exclaims—*
And this libation

Is for the excellent Beleses.

Myr. Why
Dwells thy mind rather upon that man's name
Than on his mate's in villainy?

Sar. The other
Is a mere soldier, a mere tool, a kind
Of human sword in a friend's hand; the other
Is master-mover of his warlike puppet:
But I dismiss them from my mind. — Yet pause,
My Myrrha! dost thou truly follow me,
Freely and fearlessly?

Myr. And dost thou think
A Greek girl dare not do for love, that which
An Indian widow braves for custom? ¹

Sar. Then
We but await the signal.

Myr. It is long
In sounding.

¹ [——“ And what is there
An Indian widow dares for custom which
A Greek girl dare not do for love?” — MS.]

Sar. Now, farewell ; one last embrace.

Myr. Embrace, but *not* the last ; there is one *more*.

Sar. True, the commingling fire will mix our ashes.

Myr. And pure as is my love to thee, shall they,
Purged from the dross of earth, and earthly passion,
Mix pale with thine. A single thought yet irks me.

Sar. Say it.

Myr. It is that no kind hand will gather
The dust of both into one urn.

Sar. The better :

Rather let them be borne abroad upon
The winds of heaven, and scatter'd into air,
Than be polluted more by human hands
Of slaves and traitors. In this blazing palace,
And its enormous walls of reeking ruin,
We leave a nobler monument than Egypt
Hath piled in her brick mountains, o'er dead kings,¹
Or *kine*, for none know whether those proud piles
Be for their monarch, or their ox-god Apis :
So much for monuments that have forgotten
Their very record !²

Myr. Then farewell, thou earth
And loveliest spot of earth ! farewell, Ionia !

¹ [These lines are in bad taste enough, from the jingle between *kings* and *kine*, down to the absurdity of believing that Sardanapalus at such a moment would be likely to discuss a point of antiquarian curiosity. But they involve also an anachronism, inasmuch as, whatever date be assigned to the erection of the earlier pyramids, there can be no reason for apprehending that, at the fall of Nineveh, and while the kingdom and hierarchy of Egypt subsisted in their full splendour, the destination of those immense fabrics could have been a matter of doubt to any who might inquire concerning them. Herodotus, three hundred years later, may have been misinformed of these points ; but, when Sardanapalus lived, the erection of pyramids must, in all probability, have not been still of unfrequent occurrence, and the nature of their contents no subject of mistake or mystery. — BISHOP HEBER.]

² [Here an anonymous critic suspects Lord Byron of having read old Fuller, who says, in his quaint way, "the pyramids, doting with age, have forgotten the names of their founders."]

Be thou still free and beautiful, and far
Aloof from desolation ! My last prayer
Was for thee, my last thoughts, save *one*, were of thee !

Sar. And that ?

Myr. Is yours.

[*The trumpet of PANIA sounds without.*

Sar.

Hark !

Myr.

Now !

Sar.

Adieu, Assyria !

I loved thee well, my own, my fathers' land,
And better as my country than my kingdom.

I sated thee with peace and joys ; and this
Is my reward ! and now I owe thee nothing,

Not even a grave. [*He mounts the pile.*

Now, Myrrha !

Myr.

Art thou ready ?

Sar. As the torch in thy grasp.

[*MYRRHA fires the pile.*

Myr.

'T is fired ! I come.

[*As MYRRHA springs forward to throw herself into
the flames, the Curtain falls.*¹

¹ [In "Sardanapalus" Lord Byron has been far more fortunate than in the "Doge of Venice," inasmuch as his subject is one eminently adapted not only to tragedy in general, but to that peculiar kind of tragedy which Lord Byron is anxious to recommend. The history of the last of the Assyrian kings is at once sufficiently well known to awaken that previous interest which belongs to illustrious names and early associations ; and sufficiently remote and obscure to admit of any modification of incident or character which a poet may find convenient. All that we know of Nineveh and its sovereigns is majestic, indistinct, and mysterious. We read of an extensive and civilised monarchy erected in the ages immediately succeeding the deluge, and existing in full might and majesty while the shores of Greece and Italy were unoccupied, except by roving savages. We read of an empire whose influence extended from Samarcand to Troy, and from the mountains of Judah to those of Caucasus, subverted, after a continuance of thigteen hundred years, and a dynasty of thirty generations, in an almost incredibly short space of time, less by the revolt of two provinces than by the anger of Heaven and the predicted fury of natural and inanimate agents. And the influence which both the

conquests and the misfortunes of Assyria appear to have exerted over the fates of the people for whom, of all others in ancient history, our strongest feelings are (from religious motives) interested, throws a sort of sacred pomp over the greatness and the crimes of the descendants of Nimrod, and a reverence which no other equally remote portion of profane history is likely to obtain with us. At the same time, all which we know is so brief, so general, and so disjointed, that we have few of those preconceived notions of the persons and facts represented which in classical dramas, if servilely followed, destroy the interest, and if rashly departed from offend the prejudices, of the reader or the auditor. An outline is given of the most majestic kind; but it is an outline only, which the poet may fill up at pleasure; and in ascribing, as Lord Byron has done for the sake of his favourite unities, the destruction of the Assyrian empire to the treason of one night, instead of the war of several years, he has neither shocked our better knowledge, nor incurred any conspicuous improbability. . . Still, however, the development of Sardanapalus's character is incidental only to the plot of Lord Byron's drama, and though the unities have confined his picture within far narrower limits than he might otherwise have thought advisable, the character is admirably sketched; nor is there any one of the portraits of this great master which gives us a more favourable opinion of his talents, his force of conception, his delicacy and vigour of touch, or the richness and harmony of his colouring. He had, indeed, no unfavourable groundwork, even in the few hints supplied by the ancient historians, as to the conduct and history of the last and most unfortunate of the line of Belus. Though accused (whether truly or falsely), by his triumphant enemies, of the most revolting vices, and an effeminacy even beyond what might be expected from the last dregs of Asiatic despotism, we find Sardanapalus, when roused by the approach of danger, conducting his armies with a courage, a skill, and, for some time at least, with a success not inferior to those of his most warlike ancestors. We find him retaining to the last the fidelity of his most trusted servants, his nearest kindred, and no small proportion of his hardest subjects. We see him providing for the safety of his wife, his children, and his capital city, with all the calmness and prudence of an experienced captain. We see him at length subdued, not by man, but by Heaven and the elements, and seeking his death with a mixture of heroism and ferocity which little accords with our notions of a weak or utterly degraded character. And even the strange story, variously told, and without further explanation scarcely intelligible, which represents him as building (or fortifying) two cities in a single day, and then deforming his exploits with an indelicate image and inscription, would seem to imply a mixture of energy with his folly not impossible, perhaps, to the madness of absolute power, and which may lead us to impute his fall less to weakness than to an injudicious and ostentatious contempt of the opinions and prejudices of mankind. Such a

character, — luxurious, energetic, misanthropical, — affords, beyond a doubt, no common advantages to the work of poetic delineation; and it is precisely the character which Lord Byron most delights to draw, and which he has succeeded best in drawing. — **BISHOP HEBER.**

I remember Lord Byron's mentioning, that the story of Sardanapalus had been working in his brain for seven years before he commenced it — **TREFLAWNY**

The following is an extract from the Life of Dr. Parr: — "In the course of the evening the Doctor cried out — 'Have you read Sardanapalus?' — 'Yes, Sir' — 'Right; and you couldn't sleep a wink after it?' — 'No' — 'Right, right — now don't say a word more about it to-night.' — The memory of that fine poem seemed to act like a spell of horrible fascination upon him."]

THE END.

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MARINO FALIERO,

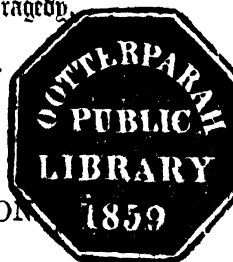
DOGE OF VENICE.

An Historical Tragedy.

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

LORD BYRON



— — —
'Dux inquieti turbidus Adriæ.' — HORA
— — —

LONDON:

JIN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

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1842.

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Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

MARINO FALIERO,
DOGE OF VENICE:
AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS.¹

¹ [On the original MS. sent from Ravenna, Lord Byron has written: — "Begun April 4th, 1820 — completed July 16th, 1820 — finished copying August 16th-17th, 1820; the which copying makes ten times the toil of composing, considering the weather — thermometer 90 in the shade — and my domestic duties."]

[LORD BYRON finished the composition of this tragedy on the 16th July, 1820. He at the time intended to keep it by him for six years before sending it to the press, but resolutions of this kind are, in modern days, very seldom adhered to. It was published in the end of the same year, and, to the poet's great disgust, and in spite of his urgent and repeated remonstrances, was produced on the stage of Drury Lane Theatre early in 1821. The extracts from his letters given by Mr. Moore sufficiently explain his feelings on this occasion.]

Ma Falco hi isfa ide warmly for the truth of its adhesion to Venetian history and manners, as well as the antique severity of its structure and language, by that eminent master of Italian and classical literature, the late Ugo Foscolo. Mr. Gifford also delighted him by pronouncing it "English--genuine English." It was, however, little favoured by the contemporary critics. There was, indeed, only one who spoke of it as quite worthy of Lord Byron's reputation. "Nothing," said he, "has for a long time afforded us so much pleasure, as the rich promise of dramatic excellence unfolded in this production of Lord Byron. Without question, no such tragedy as *Marino Faliero* has appeared in English, since the day when *Otway* also was inspired to his masterpiece by the interests of a Venetian story and a Venetian conspiracy. The story of which Lord Byron has possessed himself is, we think, by far the finer of the two,--and we say *possessed*, because we believe he has adhered almost to the letter of the transactions as they really took place."--The language of the *Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviewers*, Mr. Jeffrey and Bishop Heber, was in a far different strain. The former says--

"*Marino Faliero* has undoubtedly considerable beauties, both dramatic and poetical, and might have made the fortune of any young aspirant for fame: but the name of Byron raises expectation so high, and, disappointed of it by the lofty standard which he himself has established, we are compelled to say, that we cannot but regard it as a failure, both as a poem and a play. This may be partly accounted for from the inherent difficulty of uniting these two sorts of excellence--or

confining the daring and digressive genius of poetry within the forms and limits of a regular drama, and, at the same time, imparting its warm and vivifying spirit to the practical preparation and necessary details of a complete theatrical action. These, however, are difficulties with which dramatic adventurers have long had to struggle; and over which, though they are incomparably most formidable to the most powerful spirits, there is no reason to doubt that the powers of Lord Byron would have triumphed. The true history of his failure, therefore, we conceive, and the actual cause of his misfortune on the present occasion, is to be found in the bad choice of his subject — his selection of a story which not only gives no scope to the peculiar and commanding graces of his genius, but runs continually counter to the master currents of his fancy. His great gifts are exquisite tenderness, and demoniacal sublimity; the power of conjuring up at pleasure those delicious visions of love and beauty, and pity and purity, which melt our hearts within us with a thrilling and ethereal softness — and of wielding, at the same time, that infernal fire which blasts and overthrows all things with the dark and capricious fulminations of its scorn, rancour, and revenge. With the consciousness of these great powers, and as if in wilful perversity to their suggestions, he has here chosen a story which, in a great measure, excludes the agency of either; and resolutely conducted it, so as to secure himself against their intrusion; — a story without love or hatred — misanthropy or pity — containing nothing voluptuous and nothing terrific — but depending, for its grandeur, on the anger of a very old and irritable man; and, for its attraction, on the elaborate representations of conjugal dignity and domestic honour, — the sober and austere triumphs of cold and untempted chastity, and the noble propriety of a pure and disciplined understanding. These, we think, are not the most promising themes for any writer whose business is to raise powerful emotions; nor very likely, in any hands, to redeem the modern drama from the imputation of want of spirit, interest, and excitement. But, for Lord Byron to select them for a grand dramatic effort, is as if a swift-footed racer were to tie his feet together at the starting, or a valiant knight to enter the lists without his arms. No mortal prowess could succeed under such disadvantages. — The story, in so far as it is original in our

drama, is extremely improbable, though, like most other very improbable stories, derived from authentic sources: but, in the main, it is original; being, indeed, merely another 'Venice Preserved,' and continually recalling, though certainly without eclipsing, the memory of the first. Except that Jaffier is driven to join the conspirators by the natural impulse of love and misery, and the Doge by a resentment so outrageous as to exclude all sympathy, — and that the disclosure, which is produced by love in the old play, is here ascribed to mere friendship, — the general action and catastrophe of the two pieces are almost identical; while, with regard to the writing and management, it must be owned that, if Lord Byron has most sense and vigour, Otway has by far the most passion and pathos; and that though his conspirators are better orators and reasoners than the gang of Pierre and Reynault, the tenderness of Belvidere is as much more touching, as it is more natural, than the stoical and self-satisfied decorum of Angiolina."

After an elaborate disquisition on the *Unities*, Bishop Heber thus concludes:—

"We cannot conceive a greater instance of the efficacy of system to blind the most acute perception, than the fact that Lord Byron, in works avowedly and exclusively intended for the closet, has piqued himself on the observance of rules, which (be their advantage on the stage what it may) are evidently, off the stage, a matter of perfect indifference. The only object of adhering to the unities is to preserve the illusion of the scene. To the reader they are obviously useless. It is true, that, in the closet, not only are their supposed advantages destroyed, but their inconveniences are also, in a great measure, neutralised. and it is true also, that poetry so splendid has often accompanied them, as to make us wholly overlook, in the blaze of greater excellencies, whatever inconveniences result from them, either in the closet or the theatre. But even diminished difficulties are not to be needlessly courted; and though, in the strength and dexterity of the combatant, we soon lose sight of the cumbrous trappings by which he has chosen to distinguish himself, yet, if those trappings are at once cumbersome and pedantic, not only will his difficulty of success be increased, but his failure, if he fails, will be rendered the more signal and ridiculous.

"Marmo Fabero has, we believe, been pretty generally pronounced a failure by the public voice, and we see no reason to call for a revision of their sentence. It contains, beyond all doubt, many passages of commanding eloquence, and some of genuine poetry; and the scenes, more particularly, in which Lord Byron has neglected the absurd creed of his pseudo-Hellenic writers, are conceived and elaborated with great tragic effect and dexterity. But the subject is decidedly ill-chosen. In the main tissue of the plot, and in all the busiest and most interesting parts of it, it is, in fact, no more than another 'Venice Preserved,' in which the author has had to contend (nor has he contended successfully) with our recollections of a former and deservedly popular play on the same subject. And the only respect in which it differs is, that the Jaffier of Lord Byron's plot is drawn in to join the conspirators, not by the natural and intelligible motives of poverty, aggravated by the sufferings of a beloved wife, and a deep and well-grounded resentment of oppression, but by his outrageous anger for a private wrong of no very atrocious nature. The Doge of Venice, to chastise the vulgar libel of a foolish boy, attempts to overturn that republic of which he is the first and most trusted servant; to massacre all his ancient friends and fellow-soldiers, the magistracy and nobility of the land. With such a resentment as this, thus simply stated and taken singly, who ever sympathised, or who but Lord Byron would have expected in such a cause to be able to awaken sympathy? It is little to the purpose to say that this is all historically true. A thing may be true without being probable; and such a case of idiosyncrasy as is implied in a resentment so sudden and extravagant, is no more a fitting subject for the poet, than an animal with two heads would be for an artist of a different description.

"It is true that, when a long course of mutual bickering had preceded, when the mind of the prince had been prepared, by due degrees, to hate the oligarchy with which he was surrounded and over-ruled, and to feel or suspect, in every act of the senate, a studied and persevering design to wound and degrade him, a very slight addition of injury might make the cup of anger overflow, and the insufficient punishment of Steno (though, to most men this punishment seems not unequal to the offence) might have

opened the last floodgate to that torrent which had been long gathering strength from innumerable petty insults and aggressions.

"It is also possible that an old man, doatingly fond of a young and beautiful wife, yet not insensible to the ridicule of such an unequal alliance, might for months or years have been tormenting himself with the suspected suspicions of his countrymen; have smarted, though convinced of his consort's purity, under the idea that others were not equally candid, and have attached, at length, the greater importance to Steno's ribaldry, from apprehending this last to be no more than an overt demonstration of the secret thoughts of half the little world of Venice.

"And we cannot but believe that, if the story of Fallero (unpromising as we regard it in every way of telling) had fallen into the hands of the barbarian Shakspeare, the commencement of the play would have been placed considerably earlier, that time would have been given for the gradual developement of those strong lines of character which were to decide the fate of the hero, and for the working of those subtle but not instantaneous poisons which were to destroy the peace, and embitter the feelings, and confuse the understanding, of a brave and high-minded but proud and irritable veteran.

"But the misfortune is, (and it is in a great measure, as we conceive, to be ascribed to Lord Byron's passion for the unities,) that, instead of placing this accumulation of painful feelings before our eyes, even our ears are made very imperfectly acquainted with them. Of the previous encroachments of the oligarchy on the ducal power we see nothing. Nay, we only hear a very little of it, and that in general terms, and at the conclusion of the piece; in the form of an apology for the Doge's past conduct, not as the constant and painful feeling which we ought to have shared with him in the first instance, if we were to sympathise in his views and wish success to his enterprise. The fear that his wife might be an object of suspicion to his countrymen is, in like manner, scarcely hinted at; and no other reason for such a fear is named than that which, simply taken, could never have produced it—a libel scribbled on the back of a chair. We are, therefore, through the whole tragedy, under feelings of surprise rather than of pity or sympathy, as persons witnessing portentous

events from causes apparently inadequate. We see a man become a traitor for no other visible cause (however other causes are incidentally insinuated) than a single vulgar insult, which is more likely to recoil on the perpetrator than to wound the object; and we cannot pity a death incurred in such a quarrel."

The following extract from a letter of January, 1821, will show the author's own estimate of the piece thus criticised. After repeating his hope, that no manager would be so audacious as to trample on his feelings by producing it on the stage, he thus proceeds:—

"It is too regular—the time, twenty-four hours—the change of place not frequent—nothing *melo-dramatic*—no surprises—no starts, nor trap-doors, nor opportunities 'for tossing their heads and kicking their heels'—and no *love*, the grand ingredient of a modern play. I am persuaded that a great tragedy is not to be produced by following the old dramatists—who are full of gross faults, pardoned only for the beauty of their language,—but by writing naturally and *regularly*, and producing regular tragedies, like the Greeks; but not in imitation,—merely the outline of their conduct, adapted to our own times and circumstances, and of course *no* chorus. You will laugh, and say, 'Why don't you do so?' I have, you see, tried a sketch in *Marino Faliero*; but many people think my talent '*essentially un-dramatic*,' and I am not at all clear that they are not right. If *Marino Faliero* don't fail—in the perusal—I shall, perhaps, try again (but not for the stage); and as I think that *love* is not the principal passion for tragedy (and yet most of ours turn upon it), you will not find me a popular writer. Unless it is *love*, *furious*, *criminal*, and *hapless*, it ought not to make a tragic subject. When it is melting and maudlin, it *does*, but it ought not to do; it is then for the gallery and second price boxes. If you want to have a notion of what I am trying, take up a *translation* of any of the Greek tragedians. If I said the original, it would be an impudent presumption of mine; but the translations are so inferior to the originals, that I think I may risk it. Then judge of the 'simplicity of plot,' and do not judge me by your old mad dramatists, which is like drinking usquebaugh, and then proving a fountain. Yet, after all, I suppose you do not mean that spirits is a nobler element than a clear spring bubbling up in the sun? and this I

take to be the difference between the Greeks and those turbid mountebanks — always excepting Ben Jonson, who was a scholar and a classic — Or, take up a translation of Alfieri, and try the interest, &c. of these my new attempts in the old line, by *him* in English; and then tell me fairly your opinion. But don't measure me by your own *old* or *new* tailor's yard. Nothing so easy as intricate confusion of plot and rant. Mrs. Centlivre, in comedy, has ten times the bustle of Congreve; but are they to be compared? and yet she drove Congreve from the theatre."]

Again, February 16, he thus writes, —

"You say the Doge will not be popular. did I ever write for popularity? I defy you to show a work of mine (except a tale or two) of a popular style or complexion. It appears to me that there is room for a different style of the drama; neither a servile following of the old drama, which is a grossly erroneous one, nor yet *too* French, like those who succeeded the older writers. It appears to me that good English, and a severer approach to the rules, might combine something not dishonourable to our literature. I have also attempted to make a play without love; and there are neither rings, nor mistakes, nor starts, nor outrageous canting villains, nor melo-drama in it. All this will prevent its popularity, but does not persuade me that it is *therefore* faulty. Whatever fault it has will arise from deficiency in the conduct, rather than in the conception, which is simple and severe.

"Reproach is useless always, and irritating — but my feelings were very much hurt to be dragged like a gladiator to the fate of a gladiator by that '*retiarus*,' Mr. Elliston. As to his defence and offers of compensation, what is all this to the purpose? It is like Louis XIV. who insisted upon buying at any price Algernon Sydney's horse, and, on his refusal, on taking it by force, Sydney shot his horse. I could not shoot my tragedy, but I would have flung it into the fire rather than have had it represented."

P R E F A C E.

THE conspiracy of the Doge Marino Faliero is one of the most remarkable events in the annals of the most singular government, city, and people of modern history. It occurred in the year 1355. Every thing about Venice is, or was, extraordinary — her aspect is like a dream, and her history is like a romance. The story of this Doge is to be found in all her Chronicles, and particularly detailed in the “Lives of the Doges,” by Marin Sanuto, which is given in the Appendix. It is simply and clearly related, and is perhaps more dramatic in itself than any scenes which can be founded upon the subject.

Marino Faliero appears to have been a man of talents and of courage. I find him commander in chief of the land forces at the siege of Zara, where he beat the King of Hungary and his army of eighty thousand men, killing eight thousand men, and keeping the besieged at the same time in check; an exploit to which I know none similar in history, except that of Cæsar at Alesia, and of Prince Eugene at Belgrade. He was afterwards commander of the fleet in the same war. He took Capo d'Istria. He was ambassador at Genoa and Rome, — at which last he received the news of his election to the dukedom; his absence being a proof that he sought it by no intrigue, since he was apprized of his predecessor's death and his own succession at the same moment. But he appears to have been of an ungovernable temper. A story is told by Sanuto, of his having, many years before, when podesta and

captain at Treviso, boxed the ears of the bishop, who was somewhat tardy in bringing the Host. For this, honest Sanuto "saddles him with a judgment," as Thwackum did Square; but he does not tell us whether he was punished or rebuked by the Senate for this outrage at the time of its commission. He seems, indeed, to have been afterwards at peace with the church, for we find him ambassador at Rome, and invested with the fief of Val di Marino, in the march of Treviso, and with the title of count, by Lorenzo Count-bishop of Ceneda. For these facts my authorities are Sanuto, Vettor Sandi, Andrea Navagero, and the account of the siege of Zara, first published by the indefatigable Abate Morelli, in his "*Monumenti Veneziani di varia Letteratura*," printed in 1796, all of which I have looked over in the original language. The moderns, Darù, Sismondi, and Laugier, nearly agree with the ancient chroniclers. Sismondi attributes the conspiracy to his *jealousy*, but I find this nowhere asserted by the national historians. Vettor Sandi, indeed, says, that "*Altri scrissero che . . . dalla gelosa suspizion di esso Doge siasi fatto (Michel Steno) staccar con violenza*," &c. &c.; but this appears to have been by no means the general opinion, nor is it alluded to by Sanuto or by Navagero: and Sandi himself adds, a moment after, that "*per altre Veneziane memorie traspiri, che non il solo desiderio di vendetta lo dispose alla congiura ma anche la innata abituale ambizion sua, per cui anelava a farsi principe indipendente*." The first motive appears to have been excited by the gross affront of the words written by Michel Steno on the ducal chair, and by the light and inadequate sentence of the Forty on the offender, who was one of their "*tre Capi*." The attentions of Steno himself appear to have been directed towards one of her damsels, and not to the "*Dogressa*" herself,

against whose fame not the slightest insinuation appears, while she is praised for her beauty, and remarked for her youth. Neither do I find it asserted (unless the hint of Sandi be an assertion), that the Doge was actuated by jealousy of his wife; but rather by respect for her and for his own honour, warranted by his past services and present dignity.

I know not that the historical facts are alluded to in English, unless by Dr. Moore in his *View of Italy*. His account is false and flippant, full of stale jests about old men and young wives, and wondering at so great an effect from so slight a cause. How so acute and severe an observer of mankind as the author of *Zeluco* could wonder at this is inconceivable. He knew that a basin of water spilt on Mrs. Masham's gown deprived the Duke of Marlborough of his command, and led to the inglorious peace of Utrecht — that Louis XIV. was plunged into the most desolating wars, because his minister was nettled at his finding fault with a window, and wished to give him another occupation — that Helen lost Troy — that Lucretia expelled the Tarquins from Rome — and that Cava brought the Moors to Spain — that an insulted husband led the Gauls to Clusium, and thence to Rome — that a single verse of Frederick II. of Prussia on the Abbé de Bernis, and a jest on Madame de Pompadour, led to the battle of Rosbach — that the elopement of Dearbhorgil with Mac Murehad conducted the English to the slavery of Ireland — that a personal pique between Maria Antoinette and the Duke of Orleans precipitated the first expulsion of the Bourbons — and, not to multiply instances, that Commodus, Domitian, and Caligula fell victims not to their public tyranny, but to private vengeance — and that an order to make Cromwell disembark from the ship in which he would have sailed to America destroyed both King

and Commonwealth. After these instances, on the least reflection, it is indeed extraordinary in Dr. Moore to seem surprised that a man used to command, who had served and swayed in the most important offices, should fiercely resent, in a fierce age, an unpunished affront, the grossest that can be offered to a man, be he prince or peasant. The age of Faliero is little to the purpose, unless to favour it —

“ The young man’s wrath is like straw on fire,
But like red hot steel is the old man’s ire.”

“ Young men soon give and soon forget affronts,
Old age is slow at both.”

Laugier’s reflections are more philosophical. —
“ Tale fù il fine ignominioso di un’ uomo, che la sua nascita, la sua età, il suo carattere dovevano tener lontano dalle passioni produttrici di grandi delitti. I suoi talenti per lungo tempo esercitati ne’ maggiori impieghi, la sua capacità sperimentata ne’ governi e nelle ambasciate, gli avevano acquistato la stima e la fiducia de’ cittadini, ed avevano uniti i suffragj per collocarlo alla testa della repubblica. Innalzato ad un grado che terminava gloriosamente la sua vita, il risentimento di un’ ingiuria leggiera insinuò nel suo cuore tal valeno che bastò a corrompere le antiche sue qualità, e a condurlo al termine dei scellerati ; serio esempio, che prova non esservi età, in cui la prudenza umana sia sicura, e che nell’ uomo restano sempre passioni capaci a disonorarlo, quando non invigili sopra se stesso.” ¹

Where did Dr. Moore find that Marino Faliero begged his life ? I have searched the chroniclers, and find nothing of the kind. it is true that he avowed all. He was conducted to the place of torture, but there is no mention made of any application for mercy on his part ; and the very circumstance of their having taken him to the rack seems to argue any thing but

¹ Laugier, Hist. de la Répub. de Venise.

his having shown a want of firmness, which would doubtless have been also mentioned by those minute historians, who by no means favour him: such, indeed, would be contrary to his character as a soldier, to the age in which he lived, and *at* which he died, as it is to the truth of history. I know no justification, at any distance of time, for calumniating an historical character: surely truth belongs to the dead, and to the unfortunate: and they who have died upon a scaffold have generally had faults enough of their own, without attributing to them that which the very incurring of the perils which conducted them to their violent death renders, of all others, the most improbable. The black veil which is painted over the place of Marino Faliero amongst the Doges, and the Giants' Staircase where he was crowned, and decrowned, and decapitated, struck forcibly upon my imagination; as did his fiery character and strange story. I went, in 1819, in search of his tomb more than once to the church San Giovanni e San Paolo; and, as I was standing before the monument of ~~the~~ another family, a priest came up to me and said, "I can show you finer monuments than that." I told him that I was in search of that of the Faliero family, and particularly of the Doge Marino's. "Oh," said he, "I will show it you;" and conducting me to the outside, pointed out a sarcophagus in the wall with an illegible inscription. He said that it had been in a convent adjoining, but was removed after the French came, and placed in its present situation; that he had seen the tomb opened at its removal; there were still some bones remaining, but no positive vestige of the decapitation. The equestrian statue, of which I have made mention in the third act as before that church is not, however, of a Faliero, but of some other now obsolete warrior, although of a later date.

There were two other Doges of this family prior to Marino; Ordelafo, who fell in battle at Zara in 1117 (where his descendant afterwards conquered the Huns), and Vital Faliero, who reigned in 1082. The family, originally from Fano, was of the most illustrious in blood and wealth in the city of once the most wealthy and still the most ancient families in Europe. The length I have gone into on this subject will show the interest I have taken in it. Whether I have succeeded or not in the tragedy, I have at least transferred into our language an historical fact worthy of commemoration.

It is now four years that I have meditated this work; and before I had sufficiently examined the records, I was rather disposed to have made it turn on a jealousy in Faliero. But, perceiving no foundation for this in historical truth, and aware that jealousy is an exhausted passion in the drama, I have given it a more historical form. I was, besides, well advised by the late Matthew Lewis on that point, in talking with him of my intention at Venice in 1817. "If you make him jealous," said he, "recollect that you have to contend with established writers, to say nothing of Shakspeare, and an exhausted subject: — stick to the old fiery Doge's natural character, which will bear you out, if properly drawn; and make your plot as regular as you can." Sir William Drummond gave me nearly the same counsel. How far I have followed these instructions, or whether they have availed me, is not for me to decide. I have had no view to the stage; in its present state it is, perhaps, not a very exalted object of ambition; besides, I have been too much behind the scenes to have thought it so at any time.¹ And I cannot conceive any man of irritable

¹ ["It is like being at the whole process of a woman's toilet — it disenchant's." — MS.]

feeling putting himself at the mercies of an audience. The sneering reader, and the loud critic, and the tart review, are scattered and distant calamities; but the trampling of an intelligent or of an ignorant audience on a production which, be it good or bad, has been a mental labour to the writer, is a palpable and immediate grievance, heightened by a man's doubt of their competency to judge, and his certainty of his own imprudence in electing them his judges. Were I capable of writing a play which could be deemed stage-worthy, success would give me no pleasure, and failure great pain. It is for this reason that, even during the time of being one of the committee of one of the theatres, I never made the attempt, and never will.¹ But surely

¹ While I was in the sub-committee of Drury Lane Theatre, I can vouch for my colleagues, and I hope for myself, that we did our best to bring back the legitimate drama. I tried what I could to get "De Montfort" revived, but in vain, and equally in vain in favour of Sotheby's "Ivan," which was thought an acting play; and I endeavoured also to wake Mr. Coleridge to write a tragedy. Those who are not in the secret will hardly believe that the "School for Scandal" is the play which has brought *least money*, averaging the number of times it has been acted since its production; so Manager Dibdin assured me. Of what has occurred since Maturin's * "Bertram" I am not aware; so that I may be traducing, through ignorance, some excellent new writers: if so, I beg their pardon. I have been absent from England nearly five years, and, till last year, I never read an English newspaper since my departure, and am now only aware of theatrical matters through the medium of the Parisian Gazette of Galignani, and only for the last twelve months. Let me then deprecate all offence to tragic or comic writers, to whom I wish well, and of whom I know nothing. The long complaints of the actual state of the drama arise, however, from no fault of the performers. I can conceive nothing better than Kemble, Cooke, and Kean in their very different manners, or than Elliston in *gentleman's* comedy, and in some parts of tragedy. Miss O'Neil I never saw, having made and kept a determination to see nothing which should divide or disturb my recollection of Siddons. Siddons

* [The Rev. Charles Maturin (a curate in Dublin) died in 1824. His first production, the "House of Montorio," a romance, is the only one of his works that has survived him.]

there is dramatic power somewhere, where Joanna Baillie, and Milman¹, and John Wilson² exist. The "City of the Plague" and the "Fall of Jerusalem" are full of the best "*materiel*" for tragedy that has been seen since Horace Walpole, except passages of Ethwald and De Montfort. It is the fashion to underrate Horace Walpole; firstly, because he was a nobleman, and secondly, because he was a gentleman; but, to say nothing of the composition of his incomparable letters, and of the Castle of Otranto, he is the "*Ultimus Romanorum*," the author of the Mysterious Mother, a tragedy of the highest order, and not a puling love-play. He is the father of the first romance and of the last tragedy in our language, and surely worthy of a higher place than any living writer, be he who he may.

In speaking of the drama of Marino Faliero, I forgot to mention, that the desire of preserving, though still too remote, a nearer approach to unity than the irregularity, which is the reproach of the English thea-

and Kemble were the *ideal* of tragic action; I never saw any thing at all resembling them even in *person*: for this reason, we shall never see again Coriolanus or Macbeth. When Kean is blamed for want of dignity, we should remember that it is a grace, and not an art, and not to be attained by study. In all, *not* supernatural parts, he is perfect; even his very defects belong, or seem to belong, to the parts themselves, and appear truer to nature. But of Kemble we may say, with reference to his acting, what the Cardinal de Retz said of the Marquis of Montrose, "that he was the only man he ever saw who reminded him of the heroes of Plutarch."

¹ [The Rev. Henry Hart Milman, of Brazen Nose College, Oxford, for some time Professor of Poetry in that University, and now rector of St. Margaret's, Westminster. "Fazio" is the only one of his plays that has done well on the stage.]

• ² [John Wilson, of Magdalen College, Oxford, now Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh,—the well known author of the "Isle of Palms," "Margaret Lyndsay," "Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life," &c &c., and the principal critic as well as humourist of Blackwood's Magazine.]

trical compositions permits, has induced me to represent the conspiracy as already formed, and the Doge acceding to it; whereas, in fact, it was of his own preparation and that of Israel Bertuccio. The other characters (except that of the Duchess), incidents, and almost the time, which was wonderfully short for such a design in real life, are strictly historical, except that all the consultations took place in the palace. Had I followed this, the unity would have been better preserved; but I wished to produce the Doge in the full assembly of the conspirators, instead of monotonously placing him always in dialogue with the same individuals. For the real facts, I refer to the Appendix.¹

¹ [Lord Byron originally designed to inscribe this tragedy to his friend, the late Mr. Douglas Kinnaird; but the dedication, then drawn up, has remained till now in MS. It is in these words:—

“ TO THE HONOURABLE DOUGLAS KINNAIRD.

“ My dear Douglas,

“ I dedicate to you the following tragedy, rather on account of your good opinion of it, than from any notion of my own that it may be worthy of your acceptance. But if its merits were ten times greater than they possibly can be, this offering would still be a very inadequate acknowledgment of the active and steady friendship with which, for a series of years, you have honoured your obliged and affectionate friend,

BYRON ”

At another moment, the Poet resolved to dedicate this tragedy to Goethe, whose praises of “*Manfred*” had highly delighted him; but this dedication shared the fate of that to Mr. Kinnaird: it did not reach the hands of Goethe till 1831, when it was presented to him at Weimar, by Mr. Murray, Jun.; nor was it printed at all, until Mr. Moore included it in his *Memoirs of Lord Byron*. It is to be regretted that Mr. Moore, in doing so, omitted some passages, which, the MS. having since been lost, we cannot now restore. “It is written,” he says, “in the poet’s most whimsical and mocking mood; and the unmeasured severity poured out in it upon the two favourite objects of his wrath and ridicule, compels me to deprive the reader of some of its most amusing passages.” The world are in possession of so much of Lord Byron’s sarcastic criticisms on his contemporaries, and the utter recklessness with which he threw them off is so generally appreciated, that one is at a loss to understand what purpose

could be served by suppressing the fragments thus characterised.

“ TO BARON GOETHE, &c. &c. &c. .

‘ Sir,

“ In the Appendix to an English work lately translated into German and published at Leipzig, a judgment of yours upon English poetry is quoted as follows. ‘ That in English poetry, great genius, universal power, a feeling of profundity, with sufficient tenderness and force, are to be found, but that *altogether these do not constitute poets*,’ &c. &c.

“ I regret to see a great man falling into a great mistake. This opinion of yours only proves, that the ‘ *Dictionary of ten thousand living English Authors* ’ has not been translated into German. You will have read, in your friend Schlegel’s version, the dialogue in Macbeth —

‘ There are *ten thousand* !

Macbeth. Geese, villain ?

Answer.

Authors, sir.’

Now, of these ‘ ten thousand authors,’ there are actually nineteen hundred and eighty-seven poets, all alive at this moment, whatever their works may be, as their booksellers well know. and amongst these there are several who possess a far greater reputation than mine, although considerably less than yours. It is owing to this neglect on the part of your German translators, that you are not aware of the works of

* * * * *

“ There is also another, named * * *

* * * * *

“ I mention these poets by way of sample to enlighten you. They form but two bricks of our Babel (Windor bricks, by the way), but may serve for a specimen of the building.

“ It is, moreover, asserted that ‘ the predominant character of the whole body of the present English poetry is a *disgrace and contempt for life*.’ But I rather suspect that, by one single work of *prose*, you yourself have excited a greater contempt for life, than all the English volumes of poesy that ever were written. Madame de Stael says, that ‘ Werther has occasioned more suicides than the most beautiful woman ;’ and I really believe that he has put more individuals out of this world than Napoleon himself, — except in the way of his profession. Perhaps, Illustrious Sir, the acrimonious judgment passed by a celebrated northern journal upon you in particular, and the Germans in general, has rather indisposed you towards English poetry as well as criticism. But you must not regard our critics, who are at bottom good-natured fellows, considering their two professions, — taking up the law in court, and laying it down out of it. No one can more lament their hasty and unfair judgment, in your particular, than I do ; and I so expressed myself to your friend Schlegel, in 1816, at Coppet.

" In behalf of my 'ten thousand' living brethren, and of myself, I have thus far taken notice of an opinion expressed with regard to 'English poetry' in general, and which merited notice, because it was yours.

" My principal object in addressing you was to testify my sincere respect and admiration of a man, who, for half a century, has led the literature of a great nation, and will go down to posterity as the first literary character of his age.

" You have been fortunate, Sir, not only in the writings which have illustrated your name, but in the name itself, as being sufficiently musical for the articulation of posterity. In this you have the advantage of some of your countrymen, whose names would perhaps be immortal also — if any body could pronounce them.

" It may, perhaps, be supposed, by this apparent tone of levity, that I am wanting in intentional respect towards you; but this will be a mistake: I am always flippant in prose. Considering you, as I really and warmly do, in common with all your own, and with most other nations; to be by far the first literary character which has existed in Europe since the death of Voltare, I felt, and feel, desirous to inscribe to you the following work, — *not* as being either a tragedy or a poem, (for I cannot pronounce upon its pretensions to be either one or the other, or both, or neither,) but as a mark of esteem and admiration from a foreigner to the man who has been hailed in Germany 'THE GREAT GOETHE.' I have the honour to be, with the truest respect, your most obedient and very humble servant,

" Ravenna, 8bre 14o. 1820.

BYRON.

" P. S. I perceive that in Germany, as well as in Italy, there is a great struggle about what they call '*Classical*' and '*Romantic*,' — terms which were not subjects of classification in England, at least when I left it four or five years ago. Some of the English scribblers, it is true, abused Pope and Swift, but the reason was, that they themselves did not know how to write either prose or verse; but nobody thought them worth making a sect of. Perhaps there may be something of the kind spring up lately, but I have not heard much about it, and it would be such bad taste that I shall be very sorry to believe it."

The illustrious Goethe was much gratified with this token of Lord Byron's admiration. He died at Weimar early in 1832 — a year which swept away so many of the great men of the European world — among others, Cuvier and Scott.]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

MARINO FALIERO, *Doge of Venice.*

BERTUCCIO FALIERO, *Nephew of the Doge.*

LIONI, *a Patrician and Senator.*

BENINTENDE, *Chief of the Council of Ten.*

MICHEL STENO, *One of the three Capi of the Forty.*

ISRAEL BERTUCCIO, *Chief of*
the Arsenal,

PHILIP CALENDARO,

DAGOLINO,

BERTRAM,

} *Conspirators.*

Signor of the Night, { "*Signore di Notte,*" *one of the*
Officers belonging to the Republic.

First Citizen.

Second Citizen.

Third Citizen.

VINCENZO,

PIETRO,

BATTISTA,

} *Officers belonging to the Ducal Palace.*

Secretary of the Council of Ten.

Guards, Conspirators, Citizens, The Council of Ten, The
Giunta, &c. &c.

WOMEN.

ANGIOLINA, *Wife to the Doge.*

MARIANNA, *her Friend.*

Female Attendants, &c.

Scene VENICE — in the year 1355.

MARINO FALIERO.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

An Antechamber in the Ducal Palace.

PIETRO *speaks, in entering, to* BATTISTA.

Pie. Is not the messenger return'd ?

Bat. Not yet ;

I have sent frequently, as you commanded,
But still the Signory is deep in council,
And long debate on Steno's accusation.

Pie. Too long — at least so thinks the Doge.

Bat. How bears he

These moments of suspense ?

Pie. With struggling patience.

Placed at the ducal table, cover'd o'er
With all the apparel of the state ; petitions,
Despatches, judgments, acts, reprieves, reports,
He sits as rapt in duty ; but whene'er
He hears the jarring of a distant door,
Or aught that intimates a coming step,
Or murmur of a voice, his quick eye wanders.
And he will start up from his chair, then pause,
And seat himself again, and fix his gaze

Upon some edict ; but I have observed
For the last hour he has not turned a leaf.

Bat. 'Tis said he is much moved, — and doubtless
't was

Foul scorn in Steno to offend so grossly.

Pie. Ay, if a poor man · Steno 's a patrician,
Young, galliard, gay, and haughty.

Bat. Then you think
He will not be judged hardly ?

Pie. 'T were enough
He be judged justly ; but 't is not for us
To anticipate the sentence of the Forty.

Bat. And here it comes. — What news, Vincenzo ?

Enter VINCENZO.

Vin. 'T is
Decided ; but as yet his doom 's unknown
I saw the president in act to seal
The parchment which will bear the Forty's judgment
Unto the Doge, and hasten to inform him. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

The Ducal Chamber.

MARINO FALIERO, *Doge* ; and his Nephew,
BERTUCCIO FALIERO.

Ber. F. It cannot be but they will do you justice.

Doge. Ay, such as the Avogadori¹ did,
Who sent up my appeal unto the Forty
To try him by his peers, his own tribunal.

¹ [The Avogadori, three in number, were the conductors of criminal prosecutions on the part of the state ; and no act of the councils was valid, unless sanctioned by the presence of one of them.]

Ber. F. His peers will scarce protect him ; such an act

Would bring contempt on all authority.

Doge. Know you not Venice ? Know you not the Forty ?

But we shall see anon.

Ber. F. (*addressing VINCENTZO, then entering.*)

How now — what tidings ?

Vin. I am charged to tell his highness that the court
Has pass'd its resolution, and that, soon
As the due forms of judgment are gone through,
'The sentence will be sent up to the Doge ;
In the mean time the Forty doth salute
'The Prince of the Republic, and entreat
His acceptance of their duty.

Doge.

Yes —

They are wond'rous dutiful, and ever humble.
Sentence is pass'd, you say ?

Vin.

It is, your highness :

The president was sealing it, when I
Was call'd in, that no moment might be lost
In forwarding the intimation due
Not only to the Chief of the Republic,
But the complainant, both in one united.

Ber. F. Are you aware, from aught you have perceived,
Of their decision ?

Vin.

No, my lord ; you know

The secret custom of the courts in Venice.

Ber. F. True ; but there still is something given to guess,

Which a shrewd gleaner and quick eye would catch at ;
A whisper, or a murmur, or an air
More or less solemn spread o'er the tribunal.
The Forty are but men — most worthy men,
And wise, and just, and cautious — this I graft —

And secret as the grave to which they doom
 The guilty : but with all this, in their aspects —
 At least in some, the juniors of the number —
 A searching eye, an eye like yours, Vincenzo,
 Would read the sentence ere it was pronounced.

Vin. My lord, I came away upon the moment,
 And had no leisure to take note of that
 Which pass'd among the judges, even in seeming ;
 My station near the accused too, Michel Steno,
 Made me ———

Doge (abruptly). And how look'd *he* ? deliver that.

Vin. Calm, but not overcast, he stood resign'd
 To the decree, whate'er it were ; — but lo !
 It comes, for the perusal of his highness.

Enter the SECRETARY of the Forty.

Sec. The high tribunal of the Forty sends
 Health and respect to the Doge Faliero,
 Chief magistrate of Venice, and requests
 His highness to peruse and to approve
 The sentence pass'd on Michel Steno, born
 Patrician, and arraign'd upon the charge
 Contain'd, together with its penalty,
 Within the rescript which I now present.

Doge. Retire, and wait without.

[*Exeunt SECRETARY and VINCENZO.*

Take thou this paper :

The misty letters vanish from my eyes ;
 I cannot fix them.

Ber. F. Patience, my dear uncle :
 Why do you tremble thus ? — nay, doubt not, all
 Will be as could be wish'd.

• *Doge.* Say on.

Ber. F. (reading). “ Decreed
 In council, without one dissenting voice,
 That Michel Steno, by his own confession,

Guilty on the last night of Carnival
Of having graven on the ducal throne
The following words — " 1

Doge. Would'st thou repeat them?
Would'st *thou* repeat them — *thou*, a Faliero,
Harp on the deep dishonour of our house,
Dishonour'd in its chief — that chief the prince
Of Venice, first of cities? — To the sentence.

Ber. F. Forgive me, my good lord; I will obey —
(*Reads.*) "That Michel Steno be detain'd a month
In close arrest." 2

Doge. Proceed.

Ber. F. My lord, 't is finish'd.

Doge. How, say you? — finish'd! Do I dream? —
't is false —

Give me the paper — (*Snatches the paper and reads*)
— "'T is decreed in council

That Michel Steno" — Nephew, thine arm!

Ber. F. Nay,
Cheer up, be calm; this transport is uncall'd for —
Let me seek some assistance.

1 ["Marino Faliero, dalla bella moglie — altri la gode, ed egli a mantiene." — SANUTO.]

2 [It is not in the plot only, that we think we can trace the injurious effects of Lord Byron's continental prejudices and his choice of injudicious models. We trace them in the abruptness of his verse, which has all the harshness, though not all the vigour, of Alfieri, and which, instead of that richness and variety of cadence which distinguishes even the most careless of our elder dramatists, is often only distinguishable from prose by the unrelenting uniformity with which it is divided into decasyllable portions. The sentence of the College of Justice was likely, indeed, to be prosaic; and Shakspeare and our other elder tragedians would have given it as *bonâ fide* prose, without that affectation which condemns letters, proclamations, the speeches of the vulgar, and the outcries of the rabble and the soldiery, to strut in the same precise measure with the lofty musings and dignified resentment of the powerful and the wise: — but Bertuccio Faliero might as well have spoken poetry. — HEBER.]

Doge. Stop, sir — Stir not —
'T is past.

Ber. F. I cannot but agree with you
The sentence is too slight for the offence —
It is not honourable in the Forty
To affix so slight a penalty to that
Which was a foul affront to you, and even
To them, as being your subjects; but 'tis not
Yet without remedy: you can appeal
To them once more, or to the Avogadori,
Who, seeing that true justice is withheld,
Will now take up the cause they once declined,
And do you right upon the bold delinquent.
Think you not thus, good uncle? why do you stand
So fix'd? You heed me not: — I pray you, hear me!

Doge (*dashing down the ducal bonnet, and offering to trample upon it, exclaims, as he is withheld by his nephew*)

Oh! that the Saracen were in St. Mark's!
Thus would I do him homage.

Ber. F. For the sake
Of Heaven and all its saints, my lord —

Doge. Away!
Oh, that the Genoese were in the port!
Oh, that the Huns whom I o'erthrew at Zara
Were ranged around the palace!

Ber. F. 'T is not well
In Venice' Duke to say so.

Doge. Venice' Duke!
Who now is Duke in Venice? let me see him,
That he may do me right.

Ber. F. If you forget
Your office, and its dignity and duty,
Remember that of man, and curb this passion.
The Duke of Venice —

Doge (interrupting him). There is no such thing —
It is a word — nay, worse — a worthless by-word :
The most despised, wrong'd, outraged, helpless wretch,
Who begs his bread, if 't is refused by one,
May win it from another kinder heart ;
But he, who is denied his right by those
Whose place it is to do no wrong, is poorer
Than the rejected beggar — he 's a slave —
And that am I, and thou, and all our house,
Even from this hour ; the meanest artisan
Will point the finger, and the haughty noble
May spit upon us : — where is our redress ?

Ber. F. The law, my prince —

Doge (interrupting him). You see what it has done—
I asked no remedy but from the law —
I sought no vengeance but redress by law —
I call'd no judges but those named by law —
As sovereign, I appeal'd unto my subjects,
The very subjects who had made me sovereign,
And gave me thus a double right to be so.
The rights of place and choice, of birth and service,
Honours and years, these scars, these hoary hairs,
The travel, toil, the perils, the fatigues,
The blood and sweat of almost eighty years,
Were weigh'd i' the balance, 'gainst the foulest stain,
The grossest insult, most contemptuous crime
Of a rank, rash patrician — and found wanting !
And this is to be borne !

Ber. F. I say not that : —
In case your fresh appeal should be rejected,
We will find other means to make all even.

Doge. Appeal again ! art thou my brother's son ?
A scion of the house of Faliero ?
The nephew of a Doge ? and of that blood,
Which hath already given three dukes to Venice ?
But thou say'st well — we must be humble now.

Ber. F. My princely uncle ! you are too much moved : —

I grant it was a gross offence, and grossly
Left without fitting punishment : but still
This fury doth exceed the provocation,
Or any provocation : if we are wrong'd,
We will ask justice ; if it be denied,
We'll take it ; but may do all this in calmness —
Deep Vengeance is the daughter of deep Silence.
I have yet scarce a third part of your years,
I love our house, I honour you, its chief,
The guardian of my youth, and its instructor —
But though I understand your grief, and enter
In part of your disdain, it doth appal me
To see your anger, like our Adrian waves,
O'ersweep all bounds, and foam itself to air.

Doge. I tell thee — *must* I tell thee — what thy father
Would have required no words to comprehend ?
Hast thou no feeling save the external sense
Of torture from the touch ? hast thou no soul —
No pride — no passion — no deep sense of honour ?

Ber. F. 'Tis the first time that honour has been
doubted,

And were the last, from any other sceptic.

Doge. You know the full offence of this born villain,
This creeping, coward, rank, acquitted felon,
Who threw his sting into a poisonous libel,
And on the honour of — Oh God ! my wife,
The nearest, dearest part of all men's honour,
Left a base slur to pass from mouth to mouth
Of loose mechanics, with all coarse foul comments,
And villainous jests, and blasphemies obscene ;
While sneering nobles, in more polish'd guise,
Whisper'd the tale, and smiled upon the lie
Which made me look like them — a courteous wittol,
Patient — ay, proud, it may be, of dishonour.

Ber. F. But still it was a lie — you knew it false.
And so did all men.

Doge. Nephew, the high Roman
Said, "Cæsar's wife must not even be suspected,"
And put her from him.

Ber. F. True — but in those days —

Doge. What is it that a Roman would not suffer,
That a Venetian prince must bear? old Dandolo
Refused the diadem of all the Cæsars,
And wore the ducal cap I trample on,
Because 't is now degraded.

Ber. F. 'T is even so

Doge. It is — it is ; — I did not visit on
The innocent creature thus most vilely slander'd
Because she took an old man for her lord,
For that he had been long her father's friend
And patron of her house, as if there were
No love in woman's heart but lust of youth
And beardless faces ; — I did not for this
Visit the villain's infamy on her,
But craved my country's justice on his head,
The justice due unto the humblest being
Who hath a wife whose faith is sweet to him,
Who hath a home whose hearth is dear to him,
Who hath a name whose honour's all to him,
When these are tainted by the accursing breath
Of calumny and scorn.

Ber. F. And what redress
Did you expect as his fit punishment ?

Doge. Death ! Was I not the sovereign of the state —
Insulted on his very throne, and made
A mockery to the men who should obey me ?
Was I not injured as a husband ? scorn'd
As man ? reviled, degraded, as a prince ?
Was not offence like his a complication
Of insult and of treason ? — and he lives !

Had he instead of on the Doge's throne
Stamp'd the same brand upon a peasant's stool,
His blood had gilt the threshold; for the carle
Had stabb'd him on the instant.

Ber. F. Do not doubt it,
He shall not live till sunset — leave to me
The means, and calm yourself.

Doge. Hold, nephew: this
Would have sufficed but yesterday; at present
I have no further wrath against this man.

Ber. F. What mean you? is not the offence re-
doubled

By this most rank — I will not say — acquittal;
For it is worse, being full acknowledgment
Of the offence, and leaving it unpunish'd?

Doge. It is *redoubled*, but not now by him:
The Forty hath decreed a month's arrest —
We must obey the Forty.

Ber. F. Obey *them*!
Who have forgot their duty to the sovereign?

Doge. Why yes; — boy, you perceive it then at last.
Whether as fellow citizen who sues
For justice, or as sovereign who commands it.
They have defrauded me of both my rights
(For here the sovereign is a citizen);
But, notwithstanding, harm not thou a hair
Of Steno's head — he shall not wear it long.

Ber. F. Not twelve hours longer, had you left to me
The mode and means: if you had calmly heard me,
I never meant this miscreant should escape,
But wish'd you to suppress such gusts of passion,
That we more surely might devise together
His taking off.

Doge. No, nephew, he must live;
At least, just now — a life so vile as his
Were nothing at this hour; in th' olden time

Some sacrifices ask'd a single victim,
Great expiations had a hecatomb.

Ber. F. Your wishes are my law : and yet I fain
Would prove to you how near unto my heart
The honour of our house must ever be.

Doge. Fear not ; you shall have time and place of
proof :

But be not thou too rash, as I have been.
I am ashamed of my own anger now ;
I pray you, pardon me.

Ber. F. Why, that 's my uncle !
The leader, and the statesman, and the chief
Of commonwealths, and sovereign of himself !
I wonder'd to perceive you so forget
All prudence in your fury at these years,
Although the cause ——

Doge. Ay, think upon the cause —
Forget it not : — When you lie down to rest,
Let it be black among your dreams ; and when
The morn returns, so let it stand between
The sun and you, as an ill-omen'd cloud
Upon a summer day of festival :
So will it stand to me ; — but speak not, stir not, —
Leave all to me ; — we shall have much to do,
And you shall have a part. — But now retire,
'T is fit I were alone.

Ber. F. (*taking up and placing the ducal bonnet on the
table*). Ere I depart,
I pray you to resume what you have spurn'd,
Till you can change it haply for a crown.
And now I take my leave, imploring you
In all things to rely upon my duty
As doth become your near and faithful kinsman,
And not less loyal citizen and subject.

[*Exit BERTUCCIO FALIERO.*

Doge (solus). Adieu, my worthy nephew. — Hollow
 bauble ! [*Taking up the ducal cap.*
 Beset with all the thorns that line a crown,
 Without investing the insulted brow
 With the all-swaying majesty of kings ;
 Thou idle, gilded, and degraded toy,
 Let me resume thee as I would a vizer. [*Puts it on.*
 How my brain aches beneath thee ! and my temples
 Throb feverish under thy dishonest weight.
 Could I not turn thee to a diadem ?
 Could I not shatter the Briarean sceptre
 Which in this hundred-handed senate rules,
 Making the people nothing, and the prince
 A pageant ? In my life I have achieved
 Tasks not less difficult — achieved for them,
 Who thus repay me ! — can I not requite them ?
 Oh for one year ! Oh ! but for even a day
 Of my full youth, while yet my body served
 My soul as serves the generous steed his lord,
 I would have dash'd amongst them, asking few
 In aid to overthrow these swoln patricians ;
 But now I must look round for other hands
 'To serve this hoary head ; — but it shall plan
 In such a sort as will not leave the task
 Herculean, though as yet 't is but a chaos
 Of darkly brooding thoughts : my fancy is
 In her first work, more nearly to the light
 Holding the sleeping images of things
 For the selection of the pausing judgment. —
 The troops are few in —

Enter VINCENZO.

Vin. There is one without
 Craves audience of your highness.

Doge. I 'm unwell —

I can see no one, not even a patrician —
Let him refer his business to the council.

Vin. My lord, I will deliver your reply ;
It cannot much import — he 's a plebeian,
'The master of a galley, I believe.

Doge. How ! did you say the patron of a galley ?
That is — I mean — a servant of the state :
Admit him, he may be on public service.

[*Exit VINCENZO.*]

Doge (solus). This patron may be sounded ! I will
try him.

I know the people to be discontented :
They have cause, since Sapienza's adverse day,
When Genoa conquer'd : they have further cause,
Since they are nothing in the state, and in
The city worse than nothing — mere machines,
To serve the nobles' most patrician pleasure.
The troops have long arrears of pay, oft promised,
And murmur deeply — any hope of change
Will draw them forward : they shall pay themselves
With plunder — but the priests — I doubt the priest-
hood

Will not be with us ; they have hated me
Since that rash hour, when, madden'd with the drone,
I smote the tardy bishop at Treviso,¹
Quickening his holy march ; yet, ne'ertheless,
They may be won, at least their chief at Rome,
By some well-timed concessions ; but, above
All things, I must be speedy : at my hour
Of twilight little light of life remains.
Could I free Venice, and avenge my wrongs,
I had lived too long, and willingly would sleep

¹ An historical fact. See Marin Sanuto's *Lives of the Doges*. —
[“ Sanuto says that Heaven took away his senses for this buffet,
and induced him to conspire : — ‘ Però fu permesso che il Faliero
perdesse l'intelletto,’ ” &c. — *Byron Letters*.]

Next moment with my sires ; and, wanting this,
Better that sixty of my fourscore years
Had been already where — how soon, I care not —
The whole must be extinguish'd ; — better that
They ne'er had been, than drag me on to be
The thing these arch-oppressors fain would make me.
Let me consider — of efficient troops
'There are three thousand posted at ——

Enter VINCENZO and ISRAEL BERTUCCIO.

Vin. May it please
Your highness, the same patron whom I spake of
Is here to crave your patience.

Doge. Leave the chamber,
Vincenzo. — [*Exit VINCENZO.*
Sir, you may advance — what would you?

I. Ber. Redress.

Doge. Of whom?

I. Ber. Of God and of the Doge.

Doge. Alas ! my friend, you seek it of the twain
Of least respect and interest in Venice.
You must address the council.

I. Ber. 'T were in vain ;
For he who injured me is one of them.

Doge. There's blood upon thy face — how came it
there?

I. Ber. 'T is mine, and not the first I've shed for
Venice,

But the first shed by a Venetian hand :
A noble smote me.

Doge. Doth he live?

I. Ber. Not long —

But for the hope I had and have, that you,
My prince, yourself a soldier, will redress
Him, whom the laws of discipline and Venice

Permit not to protect himself: — if not —
I say no more.

Doge. But something you would do —
Is it not so?

I. Ber. I am a man, my lord.

Doge. Why so is he who smote you.

I. Ber. He is call'd so;

Nay, more, a noble one — at least, in Venice:

But since he hath forgotten that I am one,

And treats me like a brute, the brute may turn —

'Tis said the worm will.

Doge. Say — his name and lineage?

I. Ber. Barbaro.

Doge. What was the cause? or the pretext?

I. Ber. I am the chief of the arsenal,¹ employ'd

At present in repairing certain galleys

But roughly used by the Genoese last year.

This morning comes the noble Barbaro

Full of reproof, because our artisans

Had left some frivolous order of his house,

To execute the state's decree: I dared

To justify the men — he raised his hand; —

Behold my blood! the first time it e'er flow'd

Dishonourably.

Doge. Have you long time served?

I. Ber. So long as to remember Zara's siege,
And fight beneath the chief who beat the Huns there,
Sometime my general, now the Doge Faliero. —

¹ [This officer was chief of the artisans of the arsenal, and commanded the Bucentaur, for the safety of which, even if an accidental storm should arise, he was responsible with his life. He mounted guard at the ducal palace during an interregnum, and bore the red standard before the new Doge on his inauguration; for which service his perquisites were the ducal mantle, and the two silver basins from which the Doge scattered the regulated pittance which he was permitted to throw among the people. — *Amelot de la Houssaye*, 79.]

Doge. How! are we comrades? — the state's ducal robes

Sit newly on me, and you were appointed
Chief of the arsenal ere I came from Rome;
So that I recognised you not. Who placed you?

I. Ber. The late Doge; keeping still my old command

As patron of a galley: my new office
Was given as the reward of certain scars
(So was your predecessor pleased to say):
I little thought his bounty would conduct me
To his successor as a helpless plaintiff;
At least, in such a cause.

Doge. Are you much hurt?

I. Ber. Irreparably in my self-esteem.

Doge. Speak out; fear nothing: being stung at heart,

What would you do to be revenged on this man?

I. Ber. That which I dare not name, and yet will do.

Doge. Then wherefore came you here?

I. Ber. I come for justice,

Because my general is Doge, and will not
See his old soldier trampled on. Had any,
Save Faliero, fill'd the ducal throne,
This blood had been wash'd out in other blood.

Doge. You come to me for justice — unto me!
The Doge of Venice, and I cannot give it;
I cannot even obtain it — 't was denied
To me most solemnly an hour ago!

I. Ber. How says your highness?

Doge. Steno is condemn'd
To a month's confinement.

I. Ber. What! the same who dared
To stain the ducal throne with those foul words,
That have cried shame to every ear in Venice?

Doge. Ay, doubtless they have echo'd o'er the
arsenal,
Keeping due time with every hammer's clink
As a good jest to jolly artisans ;
Or making chorus to the creaking oar,
In the vile tune of every galley-slave,
Who, as he sung the merry stave, exulted
He was not a shamed dotard like the Doge.

I. Ber. Is't possible? a month's imprisonment !
No more for Steno?

Doge. You have heard the offence,
And now you know his punishment ; and then
You ask redress of me ! Go to the Forty,
Who pass'd the sentence upon Michel Steno ;
They'll do as much by Barbaro, no doubt.

I. Ber. Ah ! dared I speak my feelings !

Doge. Give them breath.
Mine have no further outrage to endure.

I. Ber. Then, in a word, it rests but on your word
To punish and avenge — I will not say
My petty wrong, for what is a mere blow,
However vile, to such a thing as I am ? —
But the base insult done your state and person.

Doge. You overrate my power, which is a pageant.
This cap is not the monarch's crown ; these robes
Might move compassion, like a beggar's rags ;
Nay, more, a beggar's are his own, and these
But lent to the poor puppet, who must play
Its part with all its empire in this ermine.

I. Ber. Wouldst thou be king ?

Doge. Yes — of a happy people.

I. Ber. Wouldst thou be sovereign lord of Venice ?

Doge. Ay,

If that the people shared ~~that~~ sovereignty,
So that nor they nor I were further slaves
To this o'ergrown aristocratic Hydra,

The poisonous heads of whose envenom'd body
Have breathed a pestilence upon us all.

I. Ber. Yet, thou wast born, and still hast lived, patrician.

Doge. In evil hour was I so born; my birth
Hath made me Doge to be insulted: but
I lived and toil'd a soldier and a servant
Of Venice and her people, not the senate;
Their good and my own honour were my guerdon.
I have fought and bled; commanded, ay, and conquered;

Have made and marr'd peace oft in embassies,
As it might chance to be our country's 'vantage;
Have traversed land and sea in constant duty,
Through almost sixty years, and still for Venice,
My fathers' and my birthplace, whose dear spires,
Rising at distance o'er the blue Lagoon,
It was reward enough for me to view
Once more; but not for any knot of men,
Nor sect, nor faction, did I bleed or sweat!
But would you know why I have done all this?
Ask of the bleeding pelican why she
Hath ripp'd her bosom? Had the bird a voice,
She'd tell thee 't was for *all* her little ones.

I. Ber. And yet they made thee duke.

Doge. *They made me so;*

I sought it not, the flattering fetters met me
Returning from my Roman embassy,
And never having hitherto refused
Toil, charge, or duty for the state, I did not,
At these late years, decline what was the highest
Of all in seeming, but of all most base
In what we have to do and to endure:
Bear witness for me thou, my injured subject,
When I can neither right myself nor thee.

I. Ber. You shall do both, if you possess the will;

And many thousands more not less oppress'd,
Who wait but for a signal — will you give it?

Doge. You speak in riddles.

I. Ber. Which shall soon be read
At peril of my life ; if you disdain not
To lend a patient ear.

Doge. Say on.

I. Ber. Not thou,
Nor I alone, are injured and abused,
Contemn'd and trampled on ; but the whole people
Groan with the strong conception of their wrongs ;
The foreign soldiers in the senate's pay
Are discontented for their long arrears ;
The native mariners, and civic troops,
Feel with their friends ; for who is he amongst them
Whose brethren, parents, children, wives, or sisters,
Have not partook oppression, or pollution,
From the patricians ? And the hopeless war
Against the Genoese, which is still maintain'd
With the plebeian blood, and treasure wrung
From their hard earnings, has inflamed them further .
Even now — but, I forget that speaking thus,
Perhaps I pass the sentence of my death !

Doge. And suffering what thou hast done — fear'st
thou death ?

Be silent then, and live on, to be beaten
By those for whom thou hast bled.

I. Ber. No, I will speak
At every hazard ; and if Venice' Doge
Should turn delator, be the shame on him,
And sorrow too ; for he will lose far more
Than I.

Doge. From me fear nothing ; out with it !

I. Ber. Know then, that there are met and sworn in
secret

A band of brethren, valiant hearts and true ,

Men who have proved all fortunes, and have long
 Grieved over that of Venice, and have right
 To do so ; having served her in all climes,
 And having rescued her from foreign foes,
 Would do the same from those within her walls.
 They are not numerous, nor yet too few
 For their great purpose ; they have arms, and means,
 And hearts, and hopes, and faith, and patient courage.

Doge. For what then do they pause ?

I. Ber. An hour to strike.

Doge (aside). Saint Mark's shall strike that hour ! ¹

I. Ber. I now have placed

My life, my honour, all my earthly hopes
 Within thy power, but in the firm belief
 That injuries like ours, sprung from one cause,
 Will generate one vengeance : should it be so,
 Be our chief now — our sovereign hereafter.

Doge. How many are ye ?

I. Ber. I'll not answer that
 Till I am answer'd.

Doge. How, sir ! do you menace ?

I. Ber. No ; I affirm. I have betray'd myself ;
 But there's no torture in the mystic wells
 Which undermine your palace, nor in those
 Not less appalling cells, the " leaden roofs,"
 To force a single name from me of others.
 The Pozzi ² and the Piombi were in vain ;
 They might wring blood from me, but treachery never.
 And I would pass the fearful " Bridge of Sighs,"

¹ The bells of San Marco were never rung but by order of the Doge. One of the pretexts for ringing this alarm was to have been an announcement of the appearance of a Genoese fleet off the Lagoon.

² [The state dungeons, called Pozzi, or wells, were sunk in the thick walls of the palace ; and the prisoner, when taken out to die, was conducted across the gallery to the other side, and being then led back into the other compartment, or cell, upon the

Joyous that mine must be the last that e'er
Would echo o'er the Stygian wave which flows
Between the murderers and the murder'd, washing
The prison and the palace walls: there are
Those who would live to think on't, and avenge me.

Doge. If such your power and purpose, why come
here

To sue for justice, being in the course
To do yourself due right?

I. Ber. Because the man,
Who claims protection from authority,
Showing his confidence and his submission
To that authority, can hardly be
Suspected of combining to destroy it.
Had I sate down too humbly with this blow,
A moody brow and mutter'd threats had made me
A mark'd man to the Forty's inquisition;
But loud complaint, however angrily
It shapes its phrase, is little to be fear'd,
And less distrusted. But, besides all this,
I had another reason.

Doge. What was that?

I. Ber. Some rumours that the Doge was greatly
moved

By the reference of the Avogadori
Of Michel Steno's sentence to the Forty
Had reach'd me. I had served you, honour'd you,
And felt that you were dangerously insulted,
Being of an order of such spirits, as
Requite tenfold both good and evil: 't was
My wish to prove and urge you to redress.

bridge, was there strangled. The low portal through which the criminal was taken into this cell is now walled up; but the passage is open, and is still known by the name of the Bridge of Sighs. — HOBHOUSE.]

Now you know all; and that I speak the truth,
My peril be the proof.

Doge. You have deeply ventured;
But all must do so who would greatly win:
Thus far I'll answer you — your secret 's safe.

I. Ber. And is this all?

Doge. Unless with all intrusted,
What would you have me answer?

I. Ber. I would have you
Trust him who leaves his life in trust with you.

Doge. But I must know you plan, your names, and
numbers;
The last may then be doubled, and the former
Matured and strengthen'd.

I. Ber. We're enough already;
You are the sole ally we covet now.

Doge. But bring me to the knowledge of your chiefs.

I. Ber. That shall be done upon your formal pledge
To keep the faith that we will pledge to you.

Doge. When? where?

I. Ber. This night I'll bring to your apartment
Two of the principals: a greater number
Were hazardous.

Doge. Stay, I must think of this.
What if I were to trust myself amongst you,
And leave the palace?

I. Ber. You must come alone.

Doge. With but my nephew.

I. Ber. Not were he your son.

Doge. Wretch! dar'st thou name my son? He died
in arms

At Sapienza for this faithless state.
• Oh! that he were alive, and I in ashes!
Or that he were alive ere I be ashes!
I should not need the dubious aid of strangers.

I. Ber. Not one of all those strangers whom thou doubttest,
But will regard thee with a filial feeling,
So that thou keep'st a father's faith with them.

Doge. The die is cast. Where is the place of meeting?

I. Ber. At midnight I will be alone and mask'd
Where'er your highness pleases to direct me,
To wait your coming, and conduct you where
You shall receive our homage, and pronounce
Upon our project.

Doge. At what hour arises
The moon?

I. Ber. Late, but the atmosphere is thick and dusky,
'Tis a sirocco.

Doge. At the midnight hour, then,
Near to the church where sleep my sires;¹ the same,
Twin-named from the apostles John and Paul;
A gondola², with one oar only, will
Lurk in the narrow channel which glides by.
Be there.

I. Ber. I will not fail.

Doge.

And now retire——

¹ [“The Doges were all buried in St. Mark’s *before* Faliero. It is singular that when his predecessor, Andrea Dandolo, died, the Ten made a law that all the future Doges should be buried with their families in their own churches—one would think, by a kind of presentiment. So that all that is said of his *ancestral Doges*, as buried at St. John’s and Paul’s, is altered from the fact, they being in St. Mark’s. Make a note of this, and put *Editor* as the subscription to it. As I make such pretensions to accuracy, I should not like to be twitted even with such trifles on that score. Of the play they may say what they please, but not so of my costume and *dram. pers.*—they having been real existences.”—*Byron Letters*, Oct. 1820.]

² A gondola is not like a common boat, but is as easily rowed with one oar as with two (though, of course not so swiftly), and often is so from motives of privacy; and, since the decay of Venice, of economy.

I. Ber. In the full hope your highness will not falter
In your great purpose. Prince, I take my leave.

[*Exit* ISRAEL BERTUCCIO.]

Doge (solus). At midnight, by the church Saints
John and Paul,

Where sleep my noble fathers, I repair —
To what? to hold a council in the dark
With common ruffians leagued to ruin states!
And will not my great sires leap from the vault,
Where lie two doges who preceded me,
And pluck me down amongst them? Would they could
For I should rest in honour with the honour'd.
Alas! I must not think of them, but those
Who have made me thus unworthy of a name
Noble and brave as aught of consular
On Roman marbles; but I will redeem it
Back to its antique lustre in our annals,
By sweet revenge on all that's base in Venice,
And freedom to the rest, or leave it black
To all the growing calumnies of time,
Which never spare the fame of him who fails,
But try the Cæsar, or the Catiline,
By the true touchstone of desert — success.¹

¹ ["What Gifford says of the first act is very consolatory. English, sterling *genuine English*, is a desideratum amongst you, and I am glad that I have got so much left; though Heaven knows how I retain it: I *hear* none but from my valet, and he is Nottinghamshire; and I *see* none but in your new publications, and theirs is *no* language at all, but jargon. Gifford says that it is good English, and Foscolo says that the characters are right Venetian —

'Here are in all *two* worthy voices gain'd.'"

Byron Letters, Sept. 1820.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Ducal Palace.

ANGIOLINA (*wife of the DOGE*) and MARIANNA.

Ang. What was the Doge's answer?

Mar.

That he was

That moment summon'd to a conference ;
But 't is by this time ended. I perceived
Not long ago the senators embarking ;
And the last gondola may now be seen
Gliding into the throng of barks which stud
The glittering waters.

Ang.

Would he were return'd !

He has been much disquieted of late ;
And Time, which has not tamed his fiery spirit,
Nor yet enfeebled even his mortal frame,
Which seems to be more nourish'd by a soul
So quick and restless that it would consume
Less hardy clay — Time has but little power
On his resentments or his griefs. Unlike
To other spirits of his order, who,
In the first burst of passion, pour away
Their wrath or sorrow, all things wear in him
An aspect of eternity : his thoughts,
His feelings, passions, good or evil, all
Have nothing of old age ; and his bold brow
Bears but the scars of mind, the thoughts of years,
Not their decrepitude : and he of late
Has been more agitated than his wont.
Would he were come ! for I alone have power
Upon his troubled spirit.

Mar. It is true,
His highness has of late been greatly moved
By the affront of Steno, and with cause :
But the offender doubtless even now
Is doom'd to expiate his rash insult with
Such chastisement as will enforce respect
To female virtue, and to noble blood.

Ang. 'T was a gross insult ; but I heed it not
For the rash scorner's falsehood in itself,
But for the effect, the deadly deep impression
Which it has made upon Faliero's soul,
The proud, the fiery, the austere — austere
To all save me : I tremble when I think
To what it may conduct.

Mar. Assuredly
The Doge can not suspect you ?

Ang. Suspect me !
Why Steno dared not · when he scrawl'd his lie,
Groveling by stealth in the moon's glimmering light,
His own still conscience smote him for the act,
And every shadow on the walls frown'd shame
Upon his coward calunny.

Mar. 'T were fit
He should be punish'd grievously.

Ang. He is so.

Mar. What ! is the sentence pass'd ? is he condemn'd ?

Ang. I know not that, but he has been detected.

Mar. And deem you this enough for such foul scorn ?

Ang. I would not be a judge in my own cause,
Nor do I know what sense of punishment
May reach the soul of ribalds such as Steno ;
But if his insults sink no deeper in
The minds of the inquisitors than they,
Have ruffled mine, he will, for all acquittance,
Be left to his own shamelessness or shame.

Mar. Some sacrifice is due to slander'd virtue.

Ang. Why, what is virtue if it needs a victim?
Or if it must depend upon men's words?
The dying Roman said, "'t was but a name : "
It were indeed no more, if human breath
Could make or mar it.

Mar. Yet full many a dame,
Stainless and faithful, would feel all the wrong
Of such a slander ; and less rigid ladies,
Such as abound in Venice, would be loud
And all-inexorable in their cry
For justice.

Ang. This but proves it is the name
And not the quality they prize : the first
Have found it a hard task to hold their honour,
If they require it to be blazon'd forth ;
And those who have not kept it, seek its seeming
As they would look out for an ornament
Of which they feel the want, but not because
They think it so ; they live in others' thoughts,
And would seem honest as they must seem fair.

Mar. You have strange thoughts for a patrician
dame.

Ang. And yet they were my father's ; with his name,
The sole inheritance he left.

Mar. You want none ;
Wife to a prince, the chief of the Republic.

Ang. I should have sought none though a peasant's
bride,
But feel not less the love and gratitude
Due to my father, who bestow'd my hand
Upon his early, tried, and trusted friend,
The Count Val di Marino, now our Doge.

Mar. And with that hand did he bestow your heart ? *

Ang. He did so, or it had not been bestow'd.

Mar. Yet this strange disproportion in your years,
And, let me add, disparity of tempers,

Might make the world doubt whether such an union
Could make you wisely, permanently happy.

Ang. The world will think with worldlings; but my
heart

Has still been in my duties, which are many,
But never difficult.

Mar. And do you love him?

Ang. I love all noble qualities which merit
Love, and I loved my father, who first taught me
To single out what we should love in others,
And to subdue all tendency to lend
The best and purest feelings of our nature
To baser passions. He bestow'd his hand
Upon Faliero: he had known him noble,
Brave, generous; rich in all the qualities
Of soldier, citizen, and friend; in all
Such have I found him as my father said.
His faults are those that dwell in the high bosoms
Of men who have commanded; too much pride,
And the deep passions fiercely foster'd by
The uses of patricians, and a life
Spent in the storms of state and war; and also
From the quick sense of honour, which becomes
A duty to a certain sign, a vice
When overstrain'd, and this I fear in him.
And then he has been rash from his youth upwards,
Yet temper'd by redeeming nobleness
In such sort, that the wariest of republics
Has lavish'd all its chief employs upon him,
From his first fight to his last embassy,
From which on his return the dukedom met him.

Mar. But previous to this marriage, had your heart
Ne'er beat for any of the noble youth,
Such as in years had been more meet to match
Beauty like yours? or since have you ne'er seen

One, who, if your fair hand were still to give,
Might now pretend to Loredano's daughter?

Ang. I answer'd your first question when I said
I married.

Mar. And the second?

Ang. Needs no answer.

Mar. I pray you pardon, if I have offended.

Ang. I feel no wrath, but some surprise: I knew not
That wedded bosoms could permit themselves
To ponder upon what they *now* might choose,
Or aught save their past choice.

Mar. 'Tis their past choice
That far too often makes them deem they would
Now choose more wisely, could they cancel it.

Ang. It may be so. I knew not of such thoughts.

Mar. Here comes the Doge -- shall I retire?

Ang. It may
Be better you should quit me; he seems rapt
In thought. — How pensively he takes his way!

[*Exit MARIANNA.*]

Enter the DOGE and PIETRO.

Doge (musing). There is a certain Philip Calendaro
Now in the Arsenal, who holds command
Of eighty men, and has great influence
Besides on all the spirits of his comrades:
This man, I hear, is bold and popular,
Sudden and daring, and yet secret; 't would
Be well that he were won: I needs must hope
That Israel Bertuccio has secured him,
But fain would be ——

Pie. My lord, pray pardon me
For breaking in upon your meditation;
The Senator Bertuccio, your kinsman,
Charged me to follow and enquire your pleasure
To fix an hour when he may speak with you.

Doge. At sunset.— Stay a moment — let me see —
Say in the second hour of night. [*Exit PIETRO.*]

Ang. My lord !

Doge. My dearest child, forgive me — why delay
So long approaching me? — I saw you not.

Ang. You were absorb'd in thought, and he who now
Has parted from you might have words of weight
To bear you from the senate.

Doge. From the senate? ¹

Ang. I would not interrupt him in his duty
And theirs.

Doge. The senate's duty ! you mistake ;
'Tis we who owe all service to the senate.

Ang. I thought the Duke had held command in
Venice.

Doge. He shall. — But let that pass. — We will be
jocund.

How fares it with you? have you been abroad ?

¹ [This scene is, perhaps, the finest in the whole play. The character of the calm, pure-spirited Angiolina is developed in it most admirably ; — the great difference between her temper and that of her fiery husband is vividly portrayed ; — but not less vividly touched is that strong bond of their union which exists in the common nobleness of their deeper natures. There is no spark of jealousy in the old man's thoughts, — he does not expect the fervours of youthful passion in his wife, nor does he find them : but he finds what is far better — the fearless confidence of one, who, being to the heart's core innocent, can scarcely be a believer in the existence of such a thing as guilt. He finds every charm which gratitude, respect, anxious and deep-seated affection can give to the confidential language of a lovely, and a modest, and a pious woman. She has been extremely troubled by her observance of the countenance and gesture of the Doge, ever since the discovery of Steno's guilt ; and she does all she can to soothe him from his proud irritation. Strong in her consciousness of purity, she has brought herself to regard without anger the insult offered to herself ; and the yet uncorrected instinct of a noble heart makes her try to persuade her lord, as she is herself persuaded, that Steno, whatever be the sentence of his judges, *must* be punished — more even than they would wish him to be — by the secret suggestions of his own guilty conscience. — LOCKHART.]

The day is overcast, but the calm wave
Favours the gondolier's light skimming oar ;
Or have you held a levee of your friends ?
Or has your music made you solitary ?
Say — is there aught that you would will within
The little sway now left the Duke ? or aught
Of fitting splendour, or of honest pleasure,
Social or lonely, that would glad your heart,
To compensate for many a dull hour, wasted
On an old man oft moved with many cares ?
Speak, and 't is done.

Ang. You're ever kind to me.

I have nothing to desire, or to request,
Except to see you oftener and calmer.

Doge. Calmer ?

Ang. Ay, calmer, my good lord. — Ah, why
Do you still keep apart, and walk alone,
And let such strong emotions stamp your brow,
As not betraying their full import, yet
Disclose too much ?

Doge. Disclose too much ! — of what ?
What is there to disclose ?

Ang. A heart so ill
At case.

Doge. 'T is nothing, child. — But in the state
You know what daily cares oppress all those
Who govern this precarious commonwealth ;
Now suffering from the Genoese without,
And malcontents within — 't is this which makes me
More pensive and less tranquil than my wont.

Ang. Yet this existed long before, and never
Till in these late days did I see you thus.
Forgive me ; there is something at your heart
More than the mere discharge of public duties,
Which long use and a talent like to yours
Have render'd light, nay, a necessity,

To keep your mind from stagnating. 'Tis not
In hostile states, nor perils, thus to shake you ;
You, who have stood all storms and never sunk,
And climb'd up to the pinnacle of power
And never fainted by the way, and stand
Upon it, and can look down steadily
Along the depth beneath, and ne'er feel dizzy.
Were Genoa's galleys riding in the port,
Were civil fury raging in Saint Mark's,
You are not to be wrought on, but would fall,
As you have risen, with an unalter'd brow —
Your feelings now are of a different kind ;
Something has stung your pride, not patriotism.

Doge. Pride ! Angiolina ? Alas ! none is left me.

Ang. Yes — the same sin that overthrew the angels,
And of all sins most easily besets
Mortals the nearest to the angelic nature :
The vile are only vain ; the great are proud.

Doge. I had the pride of honour, of *your* honour,
Deep at my heart — But let us change the theme.

Ang. Ah no ! — As I have ever shared your kindness
In all things else, let me not be shut out
From your distress : were it of public import,
You know I never sought, would never seek
To win a word from you ; but feeling now
Your grief is private, it belongs to me
To lighten or divide it. Since the day
When foolish Steno's ribaldry detected
Unfix'd your quiet, you are greatly changed,
And I would soothe you back to what you were.

Doge. To what I was ! — have you heard Steno's
sentence ?

Ang. No.

Doge. • A month's arrest.

Ang. Is it not enough ?

Doge. Enough ! — yes, for a drunken galley slave,

Who, stung by stripes, may murmur at his master ;
But not for a deliberate, false, cool villain,
Who stains a lady's and a prince's honour
Even on the throne of his authority.

Ang. There seems to me enough in the conviction
Of a patrician guilty of a falsehood :
All other punishment were light unto
His loss of honour.

Doge. Such men have no honour ;
They have but their vile lives — and these are spared.

Ang. You would not have him die for this offence ?

Doge. Not now : — being still alive, I'd have him
live

Long as *he* can ; he has ceased to merit death ;
The guilty saved hath damn'd his hundred judges,
And he is pure, for now his crime is theirs.

Ang. Oh ! had this false and flippant libeller
Shed his young blood for his absurd lampoon,
Ne'er from that moment could this breast have known
A joyous hour, or dreamless slumber more.

Doge. Does not the law of Heaven say blood for
blood ?

And he who *taints* kills more than he who sheds it.

Is it the *pain* of blows, or *shame* of blows,
That makes such deadly to the sense of man ?

Do not the laws of man say blood for honour ?

And, less than honour, for a little gold ?

Say not the laws of nations blood for treason ?

Is't nothing to have fill'd these veins with poison

For their once healthful current ? is it nothing

To have stain'd your name and mine — the noblest
names ?

Is't nothing to have brought into contempt

A prince before his people ? to have fail'd

In the respect accorded by mankind

To youth in woman, and old age in man ?

To virtue in your sex, and dignity
In ours? — But let them look to it who have saved
him. ¹

Ang. Heaven bids us to forgive our enemies.

Doge. Doth Heaven forgive her own? Is Satan
saved

From wrath eternal? ²

Ang. Do not speak thus wildly —
Heaven will alike forgive you and your foes.

Doge. Amen! May Heaven forgive them!

Ang. And will you?

Doge. Yes, when they are in heaven!

Ang. And not till then?

Doge. What matters my forgiveness? an old man's,
Worn out, scorn'd, spurn'd, abused; what matters then
My pardon more than my resentment, both
Being weak and worthless? I have lived too long. —
But let us change the argument. — My child!
My injured wife, the child of Loredano,
The brave, the chivalrous, how little deem'd
Thy father, wedding thee unto his friend,
That he was linking thee to shame! — Alas!
Shame without sin, for thou art faultless. Hadst thou
But had a different husband, *any* husband
In Venice save the Doge, this blight, this brand,
This blasphemy had never fallen upon thee.
So young, so beautiful, so good, so pure,
To suffer this, and yet be unavenged!

¹ [This scene between the Doge and Angiolina, though intolerably long, has more force and beauty than any thing that goes before it. She endeavours to soothe the furious mood of her aged partner; while he insists that nothing but the libeller's death could make fitting expiation for his offence. This speech of the Doge is an elaborate, and, after all, ineffectual attempt, by rhetorical exaggerations, to give some colour to the insane and unmeasured resentment on which the piece hinges. — JEFFREY.]

² ["Doth Heaven forgive her own? is there not Hell?" — MS.]

Ang. I am too well avenged, for you still love me,
And trust, and honour me; and all men know
That you are just, and I am true: what more
Could I require, or you command?

Doge. 'T is well,
And may be better; but whate'er betide,
Be thou at least kind to my memory.

Ang. Why speak you thus?

Doge. It is no matter why;
But I would still, whatever others think,
Have your respect both now and in my grave.

Ang. Why should you doubt it? has it ever fail'd?

Doge. Come hither, child; I would a word with
you.

Your father was my friend; unequal fortune
Made him my debtor for some courtesies
Which bind the good more firmly: when, oppress'd
With his last malady, he will'd our union,
It was not to repay me, long repaid
Before by his great loyalty in friendship;
His object was to place your orphan beauty
In honourable safety from the perils,
Which, in this scorpion nest of vice, assail
A lonely and undower'd maid. I did not
Think with him, but would not oppose the thought
Which soothed his death-bed.

Ang. I have not forgotten
The nobleness with which you bade me speak
If my young heart held any preference
Which would have made me happier; nor your offer
To make my dowry equal to the rank
Of aught in Venice, and forego all claim
My father's last injunction gave you.

Doge. Thus,
'T was not a foolish dotard's vile caprice,

Nor the false edge of aged appetite,
Which made me covetous of girlish beauty,
And a young bride : for in my fieriest youth
I sway'd such passions ; nor was this my age
Infected with that leprosy of lust
Which taints the hoariest years of vicious men,
Making them ransack to the very last
The dregs of pleasure for their vanish'd joys ;
Or buy in selfish marriage some young victim,
Too helpless to refuse a state that's honest,
Too feeling not to know herself a wretch.
Our wedlock was not of this sort ; you had
Freedom from me to choose, and urged in answer
Your father's choice.

Ang. I did so ; I would do so
In face of earth and heaven ; for I have never
Repented for my sake ; sometimes for yours,
In pondering o'er your late disquietudes.

Doge. I knew my heart would never treat you
harshly ;
I knew my days could not disturb you long ;
And then the daughter of my earliest friend,
His worthy daughter, free to choose again,
Wealthier and wiser, in the ripest bloom
Of womanhood, more skilful to select
By passing these probationary years
Inheriting a prince's name and riches,
Secured, by the short penance of enduring
An old man for some summers, against all
That law's chicane or envious kinsmen might
Have urged against her right ; my best friend's child
Would choose more fitly in respect of years,
And not less truly in a faithful heart.

Ang. My lord, I look'd but to my father's wishes,
Hallow'd by his last words, and to my heart

For doing all its duties, and replying
With faith to him with whom I was affianced.
Ambitious hopes ne'er cross'd my dreams ; and should
The hour you speak of come, it will be seen so.

Doge. I do believe you ; and I know you true :
For love, romantic love, which in my youth
I knew to be illusion, and ne'er saw
Lasting, but often fatal, it had been
No lure for me, in my most passionate days,
And could not be so now, did such exist.
But such respect, and mildly paid regard
As a true feeling for your welfare, and
A free compliance with all honest wishes ;
A kindness to your virtues, watchfulness
Not shown, but shadowing o'er such little failings
As youth is apt in, so as not to check
Rashly, but win you from them ere you knew
You had been won, but thought the change your choice ;
A pride not in your beauty, but your conduct, —
A trust in you — a patriarchal love,
And not a doting homage — friendship, faith —
Such estimation in your eyes as these
Might claim, I hoped for.

Ang. And have ever had.

Doge. I think so. For the difference in our years
You knew it, choosing me, and chose : I trusted
Not to my qualities, nor would have faith
In such, nor outward ornaments of nature,
Were I still in my five and twentieth spring ;
I trusted to the blood of Loredano
Pure in your veins ; I trusted to the soul
God gave you — to the truths your father taught you —
To your belief in Heaven — to your mild virtues —
To your own faith and honour, for my own.

Ang. You have done well. — I thank you for that
trust,

Which I have never for one moment ceased
To honour you the more for.

Doge. Where is honour,
Innate and precept-strengthen'd, 'tis the rock
Of faith connubial : where it is not — where
Light thoughts are lurking, or the vanities
Of worldly pleasure rankle in the heart;
Or sensual throbs convulse it, well I know
'T were hopeless for humanity to dream
Of honesty in such infected blood,
Although 't were wed to him it covets most :
An incarnation of the poet's god
In all his marble-chisell'd beauty, or
The demi-deity, Alcides, in
His majesty of superhuman manhood,
Would not suffice to bind where virtue is not ;
It is consistency which forms and proves it :
Vice cannot fix, and virtue cannot change.
The once fall'n woman must for ever fall ;
For vice must have variety, while virtue
Stands like the sun, and all which rolls around
Drinks life, and light, and glory from her aspect.¹

Ang. And seeing, feeling thus this truth in others,
(I pray you pardon me ;) but wherefore yield you
To the most fierce of fatal passions, and
Disquiet your great thoughts with restless hate
Of such a thing as Steno ?

Doge. You mistake me.
It is not Steno who could move me thus ;
Had it been so, he should — but let that pass.

Ang. What is 't you feel so deeply, then, even now ?

Doge. The violated majesty of Venice,
At once insulted in her lord and laws.

¹ [These passages, though not perfectly dramatic, have great sweetness and dignity, and remind us, in their rich verbosity, of the moral and mellifluous parts of Massinger. — JEFFREY.]

Ang. Alas ! why will you thus consider it ?

Doge. I have thought on 't till —— but let me lead you back

To what I urged ; all these things being noted,
I wedded you ; the world then did me justice
Upon the motive, and my conduct proved
They did me right, while yours was all to praise :
You had all freedom — all respect — all trust
From me and mine ; and, born of those who made
Princes at home, and swept kings from their thrones
On foreign shores, in all things you appear'd
Worthy to be our first of native dames.

Ang. To what does this conduct ?

Doge. To thus much — that

A miscreant's angry breath may blast it all —
A villain, whom for his unbridled bearing,
Even in the midst of our great festival,
I caused to be conducted forth, and taught
How to demean himself in ducal chambers ;
A wretch like this may leave upon the wall
The blighting venom of his sweltering heart,
And this shall spread itself in general poison ;
And woman's innocence, man's honour, pass
Into a by-word ; and the doubly felon
(Who first insulted virgin modesty
By a gross affront to your attendant damsels
Amidst the noblest of our dames in public)
Requite himself for his most just expulsion
By blackening publicly his sovereign's consort,
And be absolved by his upright compeers.

Ang. But he has been condemn'd into captivity.

Doge. For such as him a dungeon were acquittal ;
And his brief term of mock-arrest will pass
Within a palace. But I've done with him ;
The rest must be with you.

Ang.

With me, my lord ?

Doge. Yes, Angiolina. Do not marvel ; I
Have let this prey upon me till I feel
My life cannot be long ; and fain would have you
Regard the injunctions you will find within
This scroll (*Giving her a paper*) — Fear not ; they
are for your advantage :
Read them hereafter at the fitting hour.

Ang. My lord, in life, and after life, you shall
Be honour'd still by me : but may your days
Be many yet — and happier than the present !
This passion will give way, and you will be
Serene, and what you should be — what you were.

Doge. I will be what I should be, or be nothing ;
But never more — oh ! never, never more,
O'er the few days or hours which yet await
The blighted old age of Faliero, shall
Sweet Quiet shed her sunset ! Never more
Those summer shadows rising from the past
Of a not ill-spent nor inglorious life,
Mellowing the last hours as the night approaches,
Shall soothe me to my moment of long rest.
I had but little more to task, or hope,
Save the regards due to the blood and sweat,
And the soul's labour through which I had toil'd
To make my country honour'd. As her servant —
Her servant, though her chief — I would have gone
Down to my fathers with a name serene
And pure as theirs ; but this has been denied me. —
Would I had died at Zara !

Ang. There you saved
The state ; then live to save her still. A day,
Another day like that would be the best
Reproof to them, and sole revenge for you.

Doge. But one such day occurs within an age,
My life is little less than one, and 't is
Enough for Fortune to have granted *once*,

That which scarce one more favour'd citizen
May win in many states and years. But why
Thus speak I? Venice has forgot that day —
Then why should I remember it? — Farewell,
Sweet Angiolina! I must to my cabinet;
There's much for me to do — and the hour hastens.

Ang. Remember what you were.

Doge. It were in vain!
Joy's recollection is no longer joy,
While sorrow's memory is a sorrow still.

Ang. At least, whate'er may urge, let me implore
That you will take some little pause of rest:
Your sleep for many nights has been so turbid,
That it had been relief to have awaked you,
Had I not hoped that Nature would o'erpower
At length the thoughts which shook your slumbers thus.
An hour of rest will give you to your toils
With fitter thoughts and freshen'd strength.

Doge. I cannot —
I must not, if I could; for never was
Such reason to be watchful: yet a few —
Yet a few days and dream-perturbed nights,
And I shall slumber well — but where? — no matter.
Adieu, my Angiolina.

Ang. Let me be
An instant — yet an instant your companion!
I cannot bear to leave you thus.

Doge. Come then,
My gentle child — forgive me; thou wert made
For better fortunes than to share in mine,
Now darkling in their close toward the deep vale
Where Death sits robed in his all-sweeping shadow.
When I am gone — it may be sooner than
Even these years warrant, for there is that stirring
Within — above — around, that in this city
Will make the cemeteries populous

As e'er they were by pestilence or war, —
When I *am* nothing, let that which I *was*
Be still sometimes a name on thy sweet lips,
A shadow in thy fancy, of a thing
Which would not have thee mourn it : but remember ;—
Let us begone, my child — the time is pressing.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A retired Spot near the Arsenal.

ISRAEL BERTUCCIO *and* PHILIP CALENDARO.

Cal. How sped you, Israel, in your late complaint ?

I. Ber. Why, well.

Cal. Is 't possible ' will he be punish'd ?

I. Ber. Yes

Cal. With what ? a mulct or an arrest ?

I. Ber. With death ! —

Cal. Now you rave, or must intend revenge,
Such as I counsell'd you, with your own hand.

I. Ber. Yes ; and for one sole draught of hate, forego
The great redress we meditate for Venice,
And change a life of hope for one of exile ;
Leaving one scorpion crush'd, and thousands stinging
My friends, my family, my countrymen !
No, Calendaro ; these same drops of blood,
Shed shamefully, shall have the whole of his
For their requital — But not only his ;
We will not strike for private wrongs alone :
Such are for selfish passions and rash men,
But are unworthy a tyrannicide.

Cal. You have more patience than I care to boast.
Had I been present when you bore this insult,
I must have slain him, or expired myself
In the vain effort to repress my wrath.

I. Ber. Thank Heaven, you were not — all had else
been marr'd :

As 't is, our cause looks prosperous still.

Cal.

You saw

The Doge — what answer gave he ?

I. Ber.

That there was

No punishment for such as Barbaro.

Cal. I told you so before, and that 't was idle
To think of justice from such hands.

I. Ber.

At least,

It lull'd suspicion, showing confidence.

Had I been silent, not a sbirro but

Had kept me in his eye, as meditating

A silent, solitary, deep revenge.

Cal. But wherefore not address you to the Council ?

'The Doge is a mere puppet, who can scarce

Obtain right for himself. Why speak to him ?

I. Ber. You shall know that hereafter.

Cal.

Why not now ?

I. Ber. Be patient but till midnight. Get your
musters,

And bid our friends prepare their companies : —

Set all in readiness to strike the blow,

Perhaps in a few hours ; we have long waited

For a fit time — that hour is on the dial,

It may be, of to-morrow's sun : delay

Beyond may breed us double danger. See

That all be punctual at our place of meeting,

And arm'd, excepting those of the Sixteen,

Who will remain among the troops to wait

The signal.

Cal. These brave words have breathed new life

Into my veins ; I am sick of these protracted

And hesitating councils : day on day

Crawl'd on, and added but another link

To our long fetters, and some fresher wrong

Inflicted on our brethren or ourselves,
Helping to swell our tyrants' bloated strength.
Let us but deal upon them, and I care not
For the result, which must be death or freedom !
I'm weary to the heart of finding neither.

I. Ber. We will be free in life or death ! the grave
Is chainless. Have you all the musters ready ?
And are the sixteen companies completed
To sixty ?

Cal. All save two, in which there are
Twenty-five wanting to make up the number.

I. Ber. No matter ; we can do without. Whose
are they ?

Cal. Bertram's and old Soranzo's, both of whom
Appear less forward in the cause than we are.

I. Ber. Your fiery nature makes you deem all those
Who are not restless cold : but there exists
Oft in concentrated spirits not less daring
Than in more loud avengers. Do not doubt them.

Cal. I do not doubt the elder ; but in Bertram
There is a hesitating softness, fatal
To enterprise like ours : I've seen that man
Weep like an infant o'er the misery
Of others, heedless of his own, though greater ;
And in a recent quarrel I beheld him
Turn sick at sight of blood, although a villain's.

I. Ber. The truly brave are soft of heart and eyes,
And feel for what their duty bids them do.
I have known Bertram long ; there doth not breathe
A soul more full of honour.

Cal. It may be so :
I apprehend less treachery than weakness ;
Yet as he has no mistress, and no wife
To work upon his milkiness of spirit,
He may go through the ordeal ; it is well
He is an orphan, friendless save in us :

A woman or a child had made him less
Than either in resolve.

I. Ber.

Such ties are not
For those who are call'd to the high destinies
Which purify corrupted commonwealths ;
We must forget all feelings save the *one* —
We must resign all passions save our purpose —
We must behold no object save our country —
And only look on death as beautiful,
So that the sacrifice ascend to heaven,
And draw down freedom on her evermore.

Cal. But if we fail —

I. Ber.

They never fail who die
In a great cause : the block may soak their gore ;
Their heads may sodden in the sun ; their limbs
Be strung to city gates and castle walls —
But still their spirit walks abroad. Though years
Eclipse, and others share as dark a doom,
They but augment the deep and sweeping thoughts
Which overpower all others, and conduct
The world at last to freedom : What were we,
If Brutus had not lived ? He died in giving
Rome liberty, but left a deathless lesson —
A name which is a virtue, and a soul
Which multiplies itself throughout all time,
When wicked men wax mighty, and a state
Turns servile : he and his high friend were styled
“ The last of Romans ! ” Let us be the first
Of true Venetians, sprung from Roman sires.

Cal. Our fathers did not fly from Attila
Into these isles, where palaces have sprung
On banks redeem'd from the rude ocean's ooze,
To own a thousand despots in his place.
Better bow down before the Hun, and call
A Tartar lord, than these swoln silkworms masters !
The first at least was man, and used his sword

As sceptre: these unmanly creeping things
Command our swords, and rule us with a word
As with a spell.

I. Ber. It shall be broken soon.
You say that all things are in readiness:
'To-day I have not been the usual round,
And why thou knowest; but thy vigilance
Will better have supplied my care: these orders
In recent council to redouble now
Our efforts to repair the galleys, have
Lent a fair colour to the introduction
Of many of our cause into the arsenal,
As new artificers for their equipment,
Or fresh recruits obtain'd in haste to man
The hoped-for fleet. — Are all supplied with arms?

Cal. All who were deem'd trust-worthy: there are
some
Whom it were well to keep in ignorance
Till it be time to strike, and then supply them;
When in the heat and hurry of the hour
They have no opportunity to pause,
But needs must on with those who will surround them.

I. Ber. You have said well. Have you remark'd all
such?

Cal. I've noted most; and caused the other chiefs
To use like caution in their companies.
As far as I have seen, we are enough
To make the enterprise secure, if 't is
Commenced to-morrow; but, till 't is begun,
Each hour is pregnant with a thousand perils.

I. Ber. Let the Sixteen meet at the wonted hour.
Except Soranzo, Nicoletto Blondo,
And Marco Giuda, who will keep their watch
Within the arsenal, and hold all ready,
Expectant of the signal we will fix on.

Cal. We will not fail.

I. Ber. Let all the rest be there ;
I want a stranger to present to them.

Cal. A stranger ! doth he know the secret ?

I. Ber. Yes.

Cal. And have you dared to peril your friends' lives
On a rash confidence in one we know not ?

I. Ber. I have risk'd no man's life except my own —
Of that be certain : he is one who may
Make our assurance doubly sure, according
His aid ; and if reluctant, he no less
Is in our power : he comes alone with me,
And cannot 'scape us ; but he will not swerve.

Cal. I cannot judge of this until I know him .
Is he one of our order ?

I. Ber. Ay, in spirit,
Although a child of greatness ; he is one
Who would become a throne, or overthrow one —
One who has done great deeds, and seen great changes ;
No tyrant, though bred up to tyranny ;
Valiant in war, and sage in council ; noble
In nature, although haughty ; quick, yet wary :
Yet for all this, so full of certain passions,
That if once stirr'd and baffled, as he has been
Upon the tenderest points, there is no Fury
In Grecian story like to that which wrings
His vitals with her burning hands, till he
Grows capable of all things for revenge ;
And add too, that his mind is liberal,
He sees and feels the people are oppress'd,
And shares their sufferings. Take him all in all,
We have need of such, and such have need of us.

Cal. And what part would you have him take with
us ?

I. Ber. It may be, that of chief.

Cal. What ! and resign
Your own command as leader ?

I. Ber.

Even so.

My object is to make your cause end well,
And not to push myself to power. Experience,
Some skill, and your own choice, had mark'd me out
To act in trust as your commander, till
Some worthier should appear : if I have found such
As you yourselves shall own more worthy, think you
That I would hesitate from selfishness,
And, covetous of brief authority,
Stake our deep interest on my single thoughts,
Rather than yield to one above me in
All leading qualities? No, Calendaro,
Know your friend better ; but you all shall judge. —
Away ! and let us meet at the fix'd hour.
Be vigilant, and all will yet go well.

Cal. Worthy Bertuccio, I have known you ever
Trusty and brave, with head and heart to plan
What I have still been prompt to execute.
For my own part, I seek no other chief ;
What the rest will decide I know not, but
I am with you, as I have ever been,
In all our undertakings. Now farewell,
Until the hour of midnight sees us meet. [Exeunt.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Scene, the Space between the Canal and the Church of San Giovanni e San Paolo. An equestrian Statue before it. — A Gondola lies in the Canal at some distance.

Enter the DOGE alone, disguised.

Doge (solus). I am before the hour, the hour whose
voice,

Pealing into the arch of night, might strike
These palaces with ominous tottering,
And rock their marbles to the corner-stone,
Waking the sleepers from some hideous dream
Of indistinct but awful augury
Of that which will befall them. Yes, proud city!
Thou must be cleansed of the black blood which makes
thee

A lazar-house of tyranny : the task
Is forced upon me, I have sought it not ;
And therefore was I punish'd, seeing this
Patrician pestilence spread on and on,
Until at length it smote me in my slumbers,
And I am tainted, and must wash away
The plague spots in the healing wave. Tall fane !
Where sleep my fathers, whose dim statues shadow
The floor which doth divide us from the dead,
Where all the pregnant hearts of our bold blood,
Moulder'd into a mite of ashes, hold
In one shrunk heap what once made many heroes,
When what is now a handful shook the earth —
Fane of the tutelar saints who guard our house !
Vault where two Doges rest — my sires ! who died
The one of toil, the other in the field,
With a long race of other lineal chiefs
And sages, whose great labours, wounds, and state
I have inherited, — let the graves gape,
Till all thine aisles be peopled with the dead,
And pour them from thy portals to gaze on me !
I call them up, and them and thee to witness
What it hath been which put me to this task —
Their pure high blood, their blazon-roll of glories,
Their mighty name dishonour'd all in me,
Not *by* me, but by the ungrateful nobles •
We fought to make our equals, not our lords : —

And chiefly thou, Ordelafo the brave,
 Who perish'd in the field, where I since conquer'd,
 Battling at Zara, did the hecatombs
 Of thine and Venice' foes, there offer'd up
 By thy descendant, merit such acquittance?
 Spirits! smile down upon me; for my cause
 Is yours, in all life now can be of yours, —
 Your fame, your name, all mingled up in mine,
 And in the future fortunes of our race!
 Let me but prosper, and I make this city
 Free and immortal, and our house's name
 Worthier of what you were, now and hereafter!¹

Enter ISRAEL BERTUCCIO.

I. Ber. Who goes there?

Doge.

A friend to Venice.

I. Ber.

'Tis he.

Welcome, my lord, — you are before the time.

Doge. I am ready to proceed to your assembly.

I. Ber. Have with you. — I am proud and pleased
 to see

Such confident alacrity. Your doubts
 Since our last meeting, then, are all dispell'd?

Doge. Not so — but I have set my little left
 Of life upon this cast: the die was thrown
 When I first listen'd to your treason — Start not!
That is the word; I cannot shape my tongue
 To syllable black deeds into smooth names,
 Though I be wrought on to commit them. When
 I heard you tempt your sovereign, and forbore
 To have you dragg'd to prison, I became

¹ [The Doge, true to his appointment, is waiting for his conductor before the church of San Paolo e Giovanni. There is great loftiness, both of feeling and diction, in this passage. — JEFFREY.]

Your guiltiest accomplice : now you may,
If it so please you, do as much by me.

I. Ber. Strange words, my lord, and most unmerited ;
I am no spy, and neither are we traitors.

Doge. *We — We !* — no matter — you have earn'd the
right

To talk of *us*. — But to the point. — If this
Attempt succeeds, and Venice, render'd free
And flourishing, when we are in our graves,
Conducts her generations to our tombs,
And makes her children with their little hands
Strew flowers o'er her deliverers' ashes, then
The consequence will sanctify the deed,
And we shall be like the two Bruti in
The annals of hereafter ; but if not,
If we should fail, employing bloody means
And secret plot, although to a good end,
Still we are traitors, honest Israel ; — thou
No less than he who was thy sovereign
Six hours ago, and now thy brother rebel.

I. Ber. 'Tis not the moment to consider thus,
Else I could answer. — Let us to the meeting,
Or we may be observed in lingering here.

Doge. We are observed, and have been.

I. Ber.

We observed !

Let me discover — and this steel —

Doge.

Put up ;

Here are no human witnesses : look there —
What see you ?

I. Ber. Only a tall warrior's statue
Bestriding a proud steed, in the dim light
Of the dull moon.

Doge. That warrior was the sire
Of my sire's fathers, and that statue was
Decreed to him by the twice rescued city : —
Think you that he looks down on us or no ?

I. Ber. My lord, these are mere fantasies, there are No eyes in marble.

Doge. But there are in Death.
I tell thee, man, there is a spirit in
Such things that acts and sees, unseen, though felt;
And, if there be a spell to stir the dead,
'T is in such deeds as we are now upon.
Deem'st thou the souls of such a race as mine
Can rest, when he, their last descendant chief,
Stands plotting on the brink of their pure graves
With stung plebeians? ¹

I. Ber. It had been as well
To have ponder'd this before, — ere you embark'd
In our great enterprise. — Do you repent?

Doge. No — but I *feel*, and shall do to the last.
I cannot quench a glorious life at once,
Nor dwindle to the thing I now must be, ²
And take men's lives by stealth, without some pause :

¹ [There is a great deal of natural struggle in the breast of the highborn and haughty Doge, between the resentment with which he burns on the one hand, and the reluctance with which he considers the meanness of the associates with whom he has leagued himself, on the other. The conspiring Doge is not, we think, meant to be ambitious for himself, but he is sternly, proudly, a Venetian noble; and it is impossible for him to tear from his bosom the scorn for every thing plebeian which has been implanted there by birth, education, and a long life of princely command. There are other thoughts, too, and of a gentler kind, which cross from time to time his perturbed spirit. He remembers — he cannot entirely forget — the days and nights of old companionship, by which he had long been bound to those whose sentence he has consented to seal. He has himself been declaiming against the folly of mercy, and arguing valiantly the necessity of total extirpation, — and that, too, in the teeth even of some of the plebeian conspirators themselves: yet the poet, with profound insight into the human heart, makes him shudder when his own impetuosity has brought himself, and all who hear him, to the brink. He cannot look upon the bloody resolution, no not even after he himself has been the chief instrument of its formation. — LOCKHART.]

² ["Not dwindle to a cut-throat without shuddering." — MS.]

Yet doubt me not ; it is this very feeling,
 And knowing *what* has wrung me to be thus,
 Which is your best security. There's not
 A roused mechanic in your busy plot
 So wrong'd as I, so fall'n, so loudly call'd
 To his redress : the very means I am forced
 By these fell tyrants to adopt is such,
 That I abhor them doubly for the deeds
 Which I must do to pay them back for theirs.

I. Ber. Let us away — hark — the hour strikes.

Doge.

On — on —

It is our knell, or that of Venice — On.

I. Ber. Say rather, 't is her freedom's rising peal
 Of triumph — This way — we are near the place:
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The House where the Conspirators meet.

DAGOLINO, DORO, BERTRAM, FEDELE TREVISANO, CA-
 LENDARO, ANTONIO DELLE BENDE, &c. &c.

Cal. (entering). Are all here?

Dag. All with you ; except the three
 On duty, and our leader Israel,
 Who is expected momentarily.

Cal.

Where's Bertram?

Ber. Here!

Cal.

Have you not been able to complete
 The number wanting in your company?

Ber. I had mark'd out some : but I have not dared
 To trust them with the secret, till assured
 That they were worthy faith.

Cal.

There is no need
 Of trusting to their faith ; *who*, save ourselves

And our more chosen comrades, is aware
Fully of our intent? they think themselves
Engaged in secret to the Signory,¹
To punish some more dissolute young nobles
Who have defied the law in their excesses;
But once drawn up, and their new swords well flesh'd
In the rank hearts of the more odious senators,
They will not hesitate to follow up
Their blow upon the others, when they see
The example of their chiefs, and I for one
Will set them such, that they for very shame
And safety will not pause till all have perish'd.

Ber. How say you? *all!*

Cal. Whom wouldst thou spare?

Ber. *I spare?*

I have no power to spare. I only question'd,
Thinking that even amongst these wicked men
There might be some, whose age and qualities
Might mark them out for pity.

Cal. Yes, such pity

As when the viper hath been cut to pieces,
The separate fragments quivering in the sun,
In the last energy of venomous life,
Deserve and have. Why, I should think as soon
Of pitying some particular fang which made
One in the jaw of the swoln serpent, as
Of saving one of these: they form but links
Of one long chain; one mass, one breath, one body;
They eat, and drink, and live, and breed together,
Revel, and lie, oppress, and kill in concert,—
So let them die as *one!*

Dag. Should *one* survive,
He would be dangerous as the whole; it is not
Their number, be it tens or thousands, but

¹ An historical fact. See APPENDIX, Note A.

The spirit of this aristocracy
Which must be rooted out ; and if there were
A single shoot of the old tree in life,
'T would fasten in the soil, and spring again
To gloomy verdure and to bitter fruit.
Bertram, we must be firm !

Cal. Look to it well,

Bertram ; I have an eye upon thee.

Ber. Who

Distrusts me ?

Cal. Not I ; for if I did so,
Thou wouldst not now be there to talk of trust :
It is thy softness, not thy want of faith,
Which makes thee to be doubted.

Ber. You should know

Who hear me, who and what I am ; a man
Roused like yourselves to overthrow oppression ;
A kind man, I am apt to think, as some
Of you have found me ; and if brave or no,
You, Calendaro, can pronounce, who have seen me
Put to the proof ; or, if you should have doubts,
I'll clear them on your person !

Cal. You are welcome,

When once our enterprise is o'er, which must not
Be interrupted by a private brawl.

Ber. I am no brawler ; but can bear myself
As far among the foe as any he
Who hears me ; else why have I been selected
To be of your chief comrades ? but no less
I own my natural weakness ; I have not
Yet learn'd to think of indiscriminate murder
Without some sense of shuddering ; and the sight
Of blood which spouts through hoary scalps is not
To me a thing of triumph, nor the death
Of man surprised a glory. Well — too well
I know that we must do such things on those

Whose acts have raised up such avengers ; but
If there were some of these who could be saved
From out this sweeping fate, for our own sakes
And for our honour, to take off some stain
Of massacre, which else pollutes it wholly,
I had been glad ; and see no cause in this
For sneer, nor for suspicion !

Dag. Calm thee, Bertram :
For we suspect thee not, and take good heart.
It is the cause, and not our will, which asks
Such actions from our hands : we'll wash away
All stains in Freedom's fountain !

Enter ISRAEL BERTUCCIO, and the DOGE, disguised.

Dag. Welcome, Israel.

Consp. Most welcome. — Brave Bertuccio, thou art
late —

Who is this stranger ?

Cal. It is time to name him.

Our comrades are even now prepared to greet him
In brotherhood, as I have made it known
That thou wouldst add a brother to our cause,
Approved by thee, and thus approved by all,
Such is our trust in all thine actions. Now
Let him unfold himself.

I. Ber. Stranger, step forth !

[*The Doge discovers himself.*

Consp. To arms ! — we are betray'd — it is the Doge !
Down with them both ! our traitorous captain, and
The tyrant he hath sold us to.

Cal. (*drawing his sword*). Hold ! hold !
Who moves a step against them dies. Hold ! hear
Bertuccio — What ! are you appall'd to see
A lone, unguarded, weaponless old man
Amongst you ? — Israel, speak ! what means this mys-
tery ?

I. Ber. Let them advance and strike at their own bosoms,
Ungrateful suicides! for on our lives
Depend their own, their fortunes, and their hopes.

Doge. Strike! — If I dreaded death, a death more fearful

Than any your rash weapons can inflict,
I should not now be here: — Oh, noble Courage!
The eldest born of Fear, which makes you brave
Against this solitary hoary head!
See the bold chiefs, who would reform a state
And shake down senates, mad with wrath and dread
At sight of one patrician! — Butcher me,
You can; I care not. — Israel, are these men
The mighty hearts you spoke of? look upon them!

Cal. Faith! he hath shamed us, and deservedly.
Was this your trust in your true chief Bertuccio,
To turn your swords against him and his guest?
Sheathe them, and hear him.

I. Ber. I disdain to speak.
They might and must have known a heart like mine
Incapable of treachery; and the power
They gave me to adopt all fitting means
To further their design was ne'er abused.
They might be certain that whoe'er was brought
By me into this council had been led
To take his choice — as brother, or as victim.

Doge. And which am I to be? your actions leave
Some cause to doubt the freedom of the choice.

I. Ber. My lord, we would have perish'd here
together,
Had these rash men proceeded; but, behold,
They are ashamed of that mad moment's impulse,
And droop their heads; believe me, they are such
As I described them — Speak to them.

Cal.

Ay, speak ;

We are all listening in wonder.

I. Ber. (addressing the conspirators). You are safe,
Nay, more, almost triumphant — listen then,
And know my words for truth.

Doge.

You see me here,

As one of you hath said, an old, unarm'd,
Defenceless man ; and yesterday you saw me
Presiding in the hall of ducal state,
Apparent sovereign of our hundred isles,
Robed in official purple, dealing out
The edicts of a power which is not mine,
Nor yours, but of our masters — the patricians.
Why I was there you know, or think you know ;
Why I am *here*, he who hath been most wrong'd,
He who among you hath been most insulted,
Outraged and trodden on, until he doubt
If he be worm or no, may answer for me,
Asking of his own heart what brought him here ?
You know my recent story, all men know it,
And judge of it far differently from those
Who sate in judgment to heap scorn on scorn.
Put spare me the recital — it is here,
Here at my heart the outrage — but my words,
Already spent in unavailing plaints,
Would only show my feebleness the more,
And I come here to strengthen even the strong,
And urge them on to deeds, and not to war
With woman's weapons ; but I need not urge you.
Our private wrongs have sprung from public vices,
In this — I cannot call it commonwealth
Nor kingdom, which hath neither prince nor people,
But all the sins of the old Spartan state ¹
Without its virtues — temperance and valour.

¹ [“ But all the worst sins of the Spartan state.” — MS.]

The Lords of Lacedæmon were true soldiers,
But ours are Sybarites, while we are Helots,
Of whom I am the lowest, most enslaved ;
Although dress'd out to head a pageant, as
The Greeks of yore made drunk their slaves to form
A pastime for their children. You are met
To overthrow this monster of a state,
This mockery of a government, this spectre,
Which must be exorcised with blood, — and then
We will renew the times of truth and justice,
Condensing in a fair free commonwealth
Not rash equality but equal rights,
Proportion'd like the columns to the temple,
Giving and taking strength reciprocal,
And making firm the whole with grace and beauty,
So that no part could be removed without
Infringement of the general symmetry.
In operating this great change, I claim
To be one of you — if you trust in me ;
If not, strike home, — my life is compromised,
And I would rather fall by freemen's hands
Than live another day to act the tyrant
As delegate of tyrants : such I am not,
And never have been — read it in our annals ;
I can appeal to my past government
In many lands and cities ; they can tell you
If I were an oppressor, or a man
Feeling and thinking for my fellow men.
Haply had I been what the senate sought,
A thing of robes and trinkets, dizen'd out
To sit in state as for a sovereign's picture ;
A popular scourge, a ready sentence-signer,
A stickler for the Senate and " the Forty,"
A sceptic of all measures which had not
The sanction of " the Ten," a council-fawner,
A tool, a fool, a puppet, — they had ne'er

Foster'd the wretch who stung me. What I suffer
Has reach'd me through my pity for the people ;
That many know, and they who know not yet
Will one day learn : meantime I do devote,
Whate'er the issue, my last days of life —
My present power such as it is, not that
Of Doge, but of a man who has been great
Before he was degraded to a Doge,
And still has individual means and mind ;
I stake my fame (and I had fame) — my breath —
(The least of all, for its last hours are nigh)
My heart — my hope — my soul — upon this cast !
Such as I am, I offer me to you
And to your chiefs, accept me or reject me,
A Prince who fain would be a citizen
Or nothing, and who has left his throne to be so.

Cal. Long live Faliero ! — Venice shall be free !

Consp. Long live Faliero !

I. Ber. Comrades ! did I well ?

Is not this man a host in such a cause ?

Doge. This is no time for eulogies, nor place
For exultation. Am I one of you ?

Cal. Ay, and the first amongst us, as thou hast been
Of Venice — be our general and chief.

Doge. Chief ! — general ! — I was general at Zara,
And chief in Rhodes and Cyprus, prince in Venice :
I cannot stoop — that is, I am not fit
To lead a band of — patriots : when I lay
Aside the dignities which I have borne,
'Tis not to put on others, but to be
Mate to my fellows — but now to the point :
Israel has stated to me your whole plan —
'Tis bold, but feasible if I assist it,
And must be set in motion instantly.

Cal. E'en when thou wilt. Is it not so, my friends ?

I have disposed all for a sudden blow ;
When shall it be then ?

Doge.

At sunrise.

Ber.

So soon ?

Doge. So soon ? — so late — each hour accumulates
Peril on peril, and the more so now
Since I have mingled with you ; — know you not
The Council, and “ the ‘Ten?’ ” the spies, the eyes
Of the patricians dubious of their slaves,
And now more dubious of the prince they have made
one ?

I tell you, you must strike, and suddenly,
Full to the Hydra’s heart — its heads will follow.

Cal. With all my soul and sword, I yield assent ;
Our companies are ready, sixty each,
And all now under arms by Israel’s order ;
Each at their different place of rendezvous,
And vigilant, expectant of some blow ;
Let each repair for action to his post !
And now, my lord, the signal ?

Doge. When you hear
The great bell of Saint Mark’s, which may not be
Struck without special order of the Doge
(The last poor privilege they leave their prince),
March on Saint Mark’s !

I. Ber.

And there ? —

Doge.

By different routes

Let your march be directed, every sixty
Entering a separate avenue, and still
Upon the way let your cry be of war
And of the Genoese fleet, by the first dawn
Discern’d before the port ; form round the palace,
Within whose court will be drawn out in arms
My nephew and the clients of our house,
Many and martial ; while the bell tolls on,
Shout ye, “ Saint Mark ! — the foe is on our waters ! ”

Cal. I see it now — but on, my noble lord.

Doge. All the patricians flocking to the Council,
(Which they dare not refuse, at the dread signal
Pealing from out their patron saint's proud tower,)
Will then be gather'd in unto the harvest,
And we will reap them with the sword for sickle.
If some few should be tardy or absent them,
'T will be but to be taken faint and single,
When the majority are put to rest.

Cal. Would that the hour were come ! we will not
scotch,

But kill.

Ber. Once more, sir, with your pardon, I
Would now repeat the question which I ask'd
Before Bertuccio added to our cause
This great ally who renders it more sure,
And therefore safer, and as such admits
Some dawn of mercy to a portion of
Our victims — must all perish in this slaughter ?

Cal. All who encounter me and mine, be sure,
The mercy they have shown, I show.

Consp.

All ! all !

Is this a time to talk of pity ? when
Have they e'er shown, or felt, or feign'd it ?

I. Ber.

Bertram,

'This false compassion is a folly, and
Injustice to thy comrades and thy cause !
Dost thou not see, that if we single out
Some for escape, they live but to avenge
The fallen ? and how distinguish now the innocent
From out the guilty ? all their acts are one —
A single emanation from one body,
Together knit for our oppression ! 'T is
Much that we let their children live ; I doubt
If all of these even should be set apart :
The hunter may reserve some single cub

From out the tiger's litter, but who e'er
 Would seek to save the spotted sire or dam,
 Unless to perish by their fangs? however,
 I will abide by Doge Faliero's counsel :
 Let him decide if any should be saved.

Doge. Ask me not — tempt me not with such a
 question —

Decide yourselves.

I. Ber. You know their private virtues
 Far better than we can, to whom alone
 Their public vices, and most foul oppression,
 Have made them deadly ; if there be amongst them
 One who deserves to be repeal'd, pronounce.

Doge. Dolfino's father was my friend, and Lando
 Fought by my side, and Marc Cornaro shared ¹
 My Genoese embassy : I saved the life ²
 Of Veniero — shall I save it twice ?
 Would that I could save them and Venice also !
 All these men, or their fathers, were my friends
 Till they became my subjects ; then fell from me
 As faithless leaves drop from the o'erblown flower,
 And left me a lone blighted thorny stalk,
 Which, in its solitude, can shelter nothing ;
 So, as they let me wither, let them perish !

Cal. They cannot co-exist with Venice' freedom !

Doge. Ye, though you know and feel our mutual
 mass

Of many wrongs, even ye are ignorant ³
 What fatal poison to the springs of life,
 To human ties, and all that 's good and dear,

¹ [“ Fought by my side, and { Marc Cornaro } shared.”— MS.]

² [“ My { Genoese embassy ; } I saved the life,” &c.]

³ [“ Bear witness with me ! ye who hear and know,
 And feel our mutual mass of many wrongs.”— MS.]

Lurks in the present institutes of Venice :
 All these men were my friends ; I loved them, they
 Requited honourably my regards ;
 We served and fought ; we smiled and wept in concert ;
 We revell'd or we sorrow'd side by side ;
 We made alliances of blood and marriage ;
 We grew in years and honours fairly, — till
 Their own desire, not my ambition, made
 Them choose me for their prince, and then farewell !
 Farewell all social memory ! all thoughts
 In common ! and sweet bonds which link old friend-
 ships,

When the survivors of long years and actions,
 Which now belong to history, soothe the days
 Which yet remain by treasuring each other,
 And never meet, but each beholds the mirror
 Of half a century on his brother's brow,
 And sees a hundred beings, now in earth,
 Flit round them whispering of the days gone by,
 And seeming not all dead, as long as two
 Of the brave, joyous, reckless, glorious band,
 Which once were one and many, still retain
 A breath to sigh for them, a tongue to speak
 Of deeds that else were silent, save on marble ——
 Oime ! Oime ! — and must I do this deed ?

I. Ber. My lord, you are much moved : it is not
 now

That such things must be dwelt upon.

Doge.

Your patience
 A moment — I recede not : mark with me
 The gloomy vices of this government.
 From the hour they made me Doge, the *Doge* THEY
 made me —

Farewell the past ! I died to all that had been
 Or rather they to me : no friends, no kindness,
 No privacy of life — all were cut off :

They came not near me, such approach gave umbrage ;
They could not love me, such was not the law ;
They thwarted me, 't was the state's policy ;
They baffled me, 't was a patrician's duty ;
They wrong'd me, for such was to right the state ;
They could not right me, that would give suspicion ;
So that I was a slave to my own subjects ;
So that I was a foe to my own friends ;
Begirt with spies for guards — with robes for power —
With pomp for freedom — gaolers for a council —
Inquisitors for friends — and hell for life !
I had one only fount of quiet left,
And *that* they poison'd ! My pure household gods ;
Were shiver'd on my hearth, and o'er their shrine
Sate grinning Ribaldry and sneering Scorn.

I. Ber. You have been deeply wrong'd, and now
shall be

Nobly avenged before another night.

Doge. I had borne all — it hurt me, but I bore it —
Till this last running over of the cup
Of bitterness — until this last loud insult,
Not only unredress'd, but sanction'd ; then,
And thus, I cast all further feelings from me —
The feelings which they crush'd for me, long, long
Before, even in their oath of false allegiance !
Even in that very hour and vow, they abjured
Their friend and made a sovereign, as boys make
Playthings, to do their pleasure — and be broken !
I from that hour have seen but senators
In dark suspicious conflict with the Doge,

¹ [“ I could have forgiven the dagger or the bow], any thing, but the deliberate desolation piled upon me, when I stood alone upon my hearth, with my household gods shivered around me. Do you suppose I have forgotten or forgiven it ? It has, comparatively, swallowed up in me every other feeling, and I am only a spectator upon earth till a tenfold opportunity offers. It may come yet.” — *Byron Letters*, 1819.]

Brooding with him in mutual hate and fear ;
 They dreading he should snatch the tyranny
 From out their grasp, and he abhorring tyrants.
 To me, then, these men have no *private* life,
 Nor claim to ties they have cut off from others ;
 As senators for arbitrary acts
 Amenable, I look on them — as such
 Let them be dealt upon. ¹

Cal. And now to action !
 Hence, brethren, to our posts, and may this be
 The last night of mere words : I 'd fain be doing !
 Saint Mark's great bell at dawn shall find me wakeful !

I. Ber. Disperse then to your posts : be firm and
 vigilant ;

Think on the wrongs we bear, the rights we claim.
 This day and night shall be the last of peril !
 Watch for the signal, and then march. I go
 To join my band ; let each be prompt to marshal
 His separate charge : the Doge will now return
 To the palace to prepare all for the blow.
 We part to meet in freedom and in glory !

Cal. Doge, when I greet you next, my homage to
 you

Shall be the head of Steno on this sword !

Doge. No ; let him be reserved unto the last,
 Nor turn aside to strike at such a prey, ²
 Till nobler game is quarried : his offence

¹ [The struggle of feelings with which the Doge undertakes the conspiracy is admirably contrasted with the ferocious eagerness of his lowborn associates ; and only loses its effect because we cannot but be sensible that the man who felt thus, could not have gone on with his gully project, unless stimulated by some greater and more accumulated injuries than are, in the course of the tragedy, brought before the perception of the reader. — *HEBER.*]

² [“ Nor turn aside to strike at such a { carrion.”
 wretch.” — *MS.*]

Was a mere ebullition of the vice,
 The general corruption generated
 By the foul aristocracy: he could not —
 He dared not in more honourable days
 Have risk'd it. I have merged all private wrath
 Against him in the thought of our great purpose.
 A slave insults me — I require his punishment
 From his proud master's hands; if he refuse it,
 The offence grows his, and let him answer it.

Cal. Yet, as the immediate cause of the alliance
 Which consecrates our undertaking more,
 I owe him such deep gratitude, that fain
 I would repay him as he merits; may I?

Doge. You would but lop the hand, and I the head;
 You would but smite the scholar, I the master;
 You would but punish Steno, I the senate.
 I cannot pause on individual hate,
 In the absorbing, sweeping, whole revenge,
 Which, like the sheeted fire from heaven, must blast
 Without distinction, as it fell of yore,
 Where the Dead Sea hath quench'd two cities' ashes.

I. Ber. Away, then, to your posts! I but remain
 A moment to accompany the Doge
 To our late place of tryst, to see no spies
 Have been upon the scout, and thence I hasten
 To where my allotted band is under arms.

Cal. Farewell, then, — until dawn!

I. Ber.

Success go with you!

Consp. We will not fail — Away! My lord, farewell!¹

[*The Conspirators salute the DOGE and ISRAEL BERTUCCIO, and retire, headed by PHILIP CALEN-
 DARO. The DOGE and ISRAEL BERTUCCIO remain.*]

¹ [The great defect of Marino Faliero is, that the nature and character of the conspiracy excite no interest. It matters little that Lord Byron has been faithful to history, if the event is

I. Ber. We have them in the toil — it cannot fail
 Now thou'rt indeed a sovereign, and wilt make
 A name immortal greater than the greatest :
 Free citizens have struck at kings ere now ;
 Cæsars have fallen, and even patrician hands
 Have crush'd dictators, as the popular steel
 Has reach'd patricians : but, until this hour,
 What prince has plotted for his people's freedom ?
 Or risk'd a life to liberate his subjects ?
 For ever, and for ever, they conspire
 Against the people, to abuse their hands
 To chains, but laid aside to carry weapons
 Against the fellow nations, so that yoke
 On yoke, and slavery and death may whet,
Not glut, the never-gorged Leviathan !
 Now, my lord, to our enterprise ; — 't is great,
 And greater the reward ; why stand you rapt ?
 A moment back, and you were all impatience !
Doge. And is it then decided ! must they die ?
I. Ber. Who ?

destitute of a poetic character. Like Alfieri, to whom, in many points, his genius approximates, he is fettered by an intractable story, which is wholly remote from the instincts and feelings of mankind. How elevated soever may be his diction, how vivid soever his colouring, a moral truth is wanting, — that charm, so difficult to define, so easy to apprehend, which, diffused over the scene, excites in generous bosoms an exalted enthusiasm for the great interests of humanity. This is the poetry of history. It is the charm of the William Tell of Schiller ; it is felt in the awful plot of Brutus, and, to a certain degree, in the conspiracy of Pierre and Jaffier ; for the end and purpose of these conspiracies were, to redeem their country from insult and oppression. But in Marino Faliero's attempt against the state, we contemplate nothing but the project of a sanguinary ruffian, seeking to grasp unlimited authority, and making, after the established precedents of all usurpers, the wrongs and sufferings of the commonalty his pretence ; while, in another aspect of his character, we see him goaded, by an imagined injury, into an enterprise which would have inundated Venice with her best blood. Is this a sublime spectacle, calculated to purge the mind, according to the aphorism of Aristotle, by means of terror or pity ? — *ECL. REV.*]

Doge. My own friends by blood and courtesy,
And many deeds and days — the senators ?

I. Ber. You pass'd their sentence, and it is a just one.

Doge. Ay, so it seems, and so it is to *you* ;
You are a patriot, plebeian Gracchus —
The rebel's oracle, the people's tribune —
I blame you not — you act in your vocation ;
They smote you, and oppress'd you, and despised you ;
So they have *me* : but *you* ne'er spake with them ;
You never broke their bread, nor shared their salt ;
You never had their wine-cup at your lips ;
You grew not up with them, nor laugh'd, nor wept,
Nor held a revel in their company ;
Ne'er smiled to see them smile, nor claim'd their smile
In social interchange for yours, nor trusted
Nor wore them in your heart of hearts, as I have :
These hairs of mine are grey, and so are theirs,
The elders of the council : I remember
When all our locks were like the raven's wing,
As we went forth to take our prey around
The isles wrung from the false Mahometan ;
And can I see them dabbled o'er with blood ?
Each stab to them will seem my suicide. ¹

¹ [The unmixed selfishness of the motives with which the Doge accedes to the plot perpetually escapes him. Not that he is wholly untouched by the compunctious visitings of nature. But the fearful unity of such a character is broken by assigning to it the throbbings and the pangs of human feelings, and by making him recoil with affright from slaughter and desolation. In the roar and whirlwind of the mighty passions which precede the acting of a dreadful plot, it is wholly unreasonable and out of keeping to put into his mouth the sentimental effusions of affectionate pity for his friends, whom he thinks of rather too late to give these touches of remorse and mercy any other character than that of hypocritical whining. The sentiments are certainly good, but lamentably out of time and place, and remind us of Scarron's remark upon the moralising Phlegyas in the infernal regions, —

“ Cette sentence est vrai et belle,
Mais dans enfer de quoi sert-elle ? ”

I. Ber. Doge! Doge! this vacillation is unworthy
A child; if you are not in second childhood,
Call back your nerves to your own purpose, nor
Thus shame yourself and me. By heavens! I'd rather
Forego even now, or fail in our intent,
Than see the man I venerate subside
From high resolves into such shallow weakness!
You have seen blood in battle, shed it, both
Your own and that of others; can you shrink then
From a few drops from veins of hoary vampires,
Who but give back what they have drain'd from mil-
lions?

Doge. Bear with me! Step by step, and blow on
blow,

I will divide with you; think not I waver:
Ah! no; it is the *certainty* of all
Which I must do doth make me tremble thus.
But let these last and lingering thoughts have way,
To which you only and the night are conscious,
And both regardless; when the hour arrives,
'Tis mine to sound the knell, and strike the blow,
Which shall unpeople many palaces,
And hew the highest genealogic trees
Down to the earth, strew'd with their bleeding fruit,
And crush their blossoms into barrenness:
This will I — must I — have I sworn to do,
Nor aught can turn me from my destiny;
But still I quiver to behold what I
Must be, and think what I have been! Bear with me.

I. Ber. Re-man your breast; I feel no such remorse,
I understand it not: why should you change?
You acted, and you act, on your free will.

Doge. Ay, there it is — *you* feel not, nor do I,

Yet, though wholly repugnant to dramatic congruity, the passage has great poetic power. — ECL. REV.]

Else I should stab thee on the spot, to save
A thousand lives, and, killing, do no murder ;
You *feel* not — *you* go to this butcher-work
As if these high-born men were steers for shambles !
When all is over, you 'll be free and merry,
And calmly wash those hands incarnadine ;
But I, outgoing thee and all thy fellows
In this surpassing massacre, shall be,
Shall see and feel — oh God ! oh God ! 't is true,
And thou dost well to answer that it was
' My own free will and act," and yet you err,
For I *will* do this ! Doubt not — fear not ; I
Will be your most unmerciful accomplice !
And yet I act no more on my free will,
Nor my own feelings — both compel me back ;
But there is *hell* within me and around,
And like the demon who believes and trembles
Must I abhor and do. Away ! away !
Get thee unto thy fellows, I will hie me
To gather the retainers of our house.
Doubt not, Saint Mark's great bell shall wake all

Venice,

Except her slaughter'd senate : ere the sun
Be broad upon the Adriatic there
Shall be a voice of weeping, which shall drown
The roar of waters in the cry of blood !
I am resolved — come on.

I. Ber.

With all my soul !

Keep a firm rein upon these bursts of passion ;
Remember what these men have dealt to thee,
And that this sacrifice will be succeeded
By ages of prosperity and freedom
To this unshackled city : a true tyrant
Would have depopulated empires, nor
Have felt the strange compunction which hath wrung
you

To punish a few traitors to the people.
Trust me, such were a pity more misplaced
Than the late mercy of the state to Steno.

Doge. Man, thou hast struck upon the chord which
jars
All nature from my heart. Hence to our task!

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.¹

Palazzo of the Patrician LIONI. LIONI laying aside the mask and cloak which the Venetian Nobles wore in public, attended by a Domestic.

Lioni. I will to rest, right weary of this revel,
The gayest we have held for many moons,
And yet, I know not why, it cheer'd me not;
There came a heaviness across my heart,
Which, in the lightest movement of the dance,
Though eye to eye, and hand in hand united

¹ [The fourth act opens with the most poetical and brilliantly written scene in the play — though it is a soliloquy, and altogether alien from the business of the piece. Lioni, a young nobleman, returns home from a splendid assembly, rather out of spirits; and, opening his palace window for air, contrasts the tranquillity of the night scene which lies before him, with the feverish turbulence and glittering enchantments of that which he has just quitted. Nothing can be finer than this picture, in both its compartments. There is a truth and a luxuriance in the description of the rout, which mark at once the hand of a master, and raise it to a very high rank as a piece of poetical painting; — while the moonlight view from the window is equally grand and beautiful, and reminds us of those magnificent and enchanting lookings forth in “*Manfred*,” which have left, we will confess, far deeper traces on our fancy, than any thing in the more elaborate work before us. — *JEFFREY.*]

Even with the lady of my love, oppress'd me,
And through my spirit chill'd my blood, until
A damp like death rose o'er my brow ; I strove
To laugh the thought away, but 't would not be ;
Through all the music ringing in my ears
A knell was sounding as distinct and clear,
Though low and far, as e'er the Adrian wave
Rose o'er the city's murmur in the night,
Dashing against the outward Lido's bulwark :
So that I left the festival before
It reach'd its zenith, and will woo my pillow
For thoughts more tranquil, or forgetfulness.
Antonio, take my mask and cloak, and light
The lamp within my chamber.

Ant.

Yes, my lord :

Command you no refreshment ?

Lioni.

Nought, save sleep,

Which will not be commanded. Let me hope it,

[*Exit ANTONIO.*

Though my breast feels too anxious ; I will try
Whether the air will calm my spirits : 't is
A goodly night ; the cloudy wind which blew
From the Levant hath crept into its cave,
And the broad moon has brighten'd. What a stillness

[*Goes to an open lattice.*

And what a contrast with the scene I left,
Where the tall torches' glare, and silver lamps'
More pallid gleam along the tapestried walls,
Spread over the reluctant gloom which haunts
Those vast and dimly-latticed galleries
A dazzling mass of artificial light,
Which show'd all things, but nothing as they were.
There Age essaying to recall the past,
After long striving for the hues of youth
At the sad labour of the toilet, and
Full many a glance at the too faithful mirror,

Prank'd forth in all the pride of ornament,
Forgot itself, and trusting to the falsehood
Of the indulgent beams, which show, yet hide,
Believed itself forgotten, and was fool'd.
There Youth, which needed not, nor thought of such
Vain adjuncts, lavish'd its true bloom, and health,
And bridal beauty, in the unwholesome press
Of flush'd and crowded wassailers, and wasted
Its hours of rest in dreaming this was pleasure,
And so shall waste them till the sunrise streams
On sallow cheeks and sunken eyes, which should not
Have worn this aspect yet for many a year.
The music, and the banquet, and the wine —
The garlands, the rose odours, and the flowers —
The sparkling eyes, and flashing ornaments —
The white arms and the raven hair — the braids
And bracelets; swanlike bosoms, and the necklace,
An India in itself, yet dazzling not
The eye like what it circled; the thin robes,
Floating like light clouds 'twixt our gaze and heaven;
The many-twinkling feet so small and sylphlike,
Suggesting the more secret symmetry
Of the fair forms which terminate so well —
All the delusion of the dizzy scene,
Its false and true enchantments — art and nature,
Which swam before my giddy eyes, that drank
The sight of beauty as the parch'd pilgrim's
On Arab sands the false mirage, which offers
A lucid lake to his eluded thirst,
Are gone. — Around me are the stars and waters —
Worlds mirror'd in the ocean, goodlier sight
Than torches glared back by a gaudy glass;
And the great element, which is to space
What ocean is to earth, spreads its blue depths,
Softened with the first breathings of the spring;
The high moon sails upon her beauteous way,

Serenely smoothing o'er the lofty walls
Of those tall piles and sea-girt palaces,
Whose porphyry pillars, and whose costly fronts,
Fraught with the orient spoil of many marbles,
Like altars ranged along the broad canal,
Seem each a trophy of some mighty deed
Rear'd up from out the waters, scarce less strangely
Than those more massy and mysterious giants
Of architecture, those Titanian fabrics,
Which point in Egypt's plains to times that have
No other record. All is gentle : nought
Stirs rudely ; but, congenial with the night,
Whatever walks is gliding like a spirit.
The tinklings of some vigilant guitars
Of sleepless lovers to a wakeful mistress,
And cautious opening of the casement, showing
That he is not unheard ; while her young hand,
Fair as the moonlight of which it seems part,
So delicately white, it trembles in
The act of opening the forbidden lattice,
To let in love through music, makes his heart
Thrill like his lyre-strings at the sight ; the dash
Phosphoric of the oar, or rapid twinkle
Of the far lights of skimming gondolas,
And the responsive voices of the choir
Of boatmen answering back with verse for verse,
Some dusky shadow checkering the Rialto ;
Some glimmering palace roof, or tapering spire,
Are all the sights and sounds which here pervade
The ocean-born and earth-commanding city —
How sweet and soothing is this hour of calm !
I thank thee, Night ! for thou hast chased away
Those horrid bodements which, amidst the throng,
I could not dissipate : and with the blessing
Of thy benign and quiet influence, —
Now will I to my couch, although to rest

Is almost wronging such a night as this — 1

[A knocking is heard from without.

Hark ! what is that ? or who at such a moment ? 2

Enter ANTONIO.

Ant. My lord, a man without, on urgent business,
Implores to be admitted.

Lioni. • Is he a stranger?

Ant. His face is muffled in his cloak, but both
His voice and gestures seem familiar to me;
I craved his name, but this he seem'd reluctant
To trust, save to yourself; most earnestly
He sues to be permitted to approach you.

Lioni. 'T is a strange hour, and a suspicious bearing !
And yet there is slight peril : 't is not in
Their houses noble men are struck at ; still,
Although I know not that I have a foe
In Venice, 't will be wise to use some caution.
Admit him, and retire ; but call up quickly
Some of thy fellows, who may wait without. —
Who can this man be ? —

[Exit ANTONIO, and returns with BERTRAM muffled.]

Ber. My good lord Lioni,

¹ [This soliloquy is exquisite, and increases our regret that, with such powers of pleasing, Lord Byron should not always have condescended to please. — HEBER]

² [The soliloquy of Lioni is a fine instance of repose, as the painters term it, amidst the horrors of the scene, and of that obscure but ruthless presentiment of evil, of which Shakspeare frequently made a use somewhat similar. Yet this splendid passage, with reference to the romantic character of the poem, is adventitious, and obviously transplanted from the mind of the poet. It is the habitual cast of thought, tinged with misanthropy, which is peculiar to Lord Byron, and does not adapt itself to the situation or feelings of the personages of his poem. It is the cool contemplation of a mind raised above the storms of human life, and the perturbation of its passions, and viewing, as from "a peculiar mount," the strife and conflicts of a world in which it disdains to mix. — ECL. REV.]

I have no time to lose, nor thou — dismiss
This menial hence; I would be private with you.

Lioni. It seems the voice of Bertram — Go, Antonio. [Exit ANTONIO.]

Now, stranger, what would you at such an hour?

Ber. (*discovering himself*). A boon, my noble patron; you have granted

Many to your poor client, Bertram; add
This one, and make him happy.

Lioni. Thou hast known me

From boyhood, ever ready to assist thee
In all fair objects of advancement, which
Beseem one of thy station; I would promise.
Ere thy request was heard, but that the hour,
Thy bearing, and this strange and hurried mode
Of suing, gives me to suspect this visit
Hath some mysterious import — but say on —
What has occurred, some rash and sudden broil? —
A cup too much, a scuffle, and a stab? —
Mere things of every day; so that thou hast not
Spilt noble blood, I guarantee thy safety;
But then thou must withdraw, for angry friends
And relatives, in the first burst of vengeance,
Are things in Venice deadlier than the laws.

Ber. My lord, I thank you; but ——

Lioni. But what? You have not
Raised a rash hand against one of our order?
If so, withdraw and fly, and own it not;
I would not slay — but then I must not save thee!
He who has shed patrician blood ——

Ber. I come
To save patrician blood, and not to shed it!
And thereunto I must be speedy, for
Each minute lost may lose a life; since Time
Has changed his slow scythe for the two-edged sword,
And is about to take, instead of sand,

The dust from sepulchres to fill his hour-glass ! —
Go not *thou* forth to-morrow !

Lioni. Wherefore not ? —
What means this menace ?

Ber. Do not seek its meaning,
But do as I implore thee ; — stir not forth,
Whate'er be stirring ; though the roar of crowds —
The cry of women, and the shrieks of babes —
The groans of men — the clash of arms — the sound
Of rolling drum, shrill trumpet, and hollow bell,
Peal in one wide alarum ! — Go not forth,
Until the tocsin's silent, nor even then
'Till I return !

Lioni. Again, what does this mean ?

Ber. Again, I tell thee, ask not ; but by all
Thou holdest dear on earth or heaven — by all
The souls of thy great fathers, and thy hope
To emulate them, and to leave behind
Descendants worthy both of them and thee —
By all thou hast of bless'd in hope or memory —
By all thou hast to fear here or hereafter —
By all the good deeds thou hast done to me,
Good I would now repay with greater good,
Remain within — trust to thy household gods,
And to my word for safety, if thou dost
As I now counsel — but if not, thou art lost !

Lioni. I am indeed already lost in wonder ;
Surely thou ravest ! what have *I* to dread ?
Who are my foes ? or if there be such, *why*
Art *thou* leagued with them ? — *thou !* or if so leagued,
Why comest thou to tell me at this hour,
And not before ?

Ber. I cannot answer this.
Wilt thou go forth despite of this true warning ?

Lioni. I was not born to shrink from idle threats,
The cause of which I know not : at the hour

Of council, be it soon or late, I shall not
Be found among the absent.

Ber. Say not so !

Once more, art thou determined to go forth ?

Lioni. I am. Nor is there aught which shall im-
pede me !

Ber. Then, Heaven have mercy on thy soul ! —
Farewell ! *[Going.]*

Lioni. Stay — there is more in this than my own
safety

Which makes me call thee back ; we must not part
thus :

Bertram, I have known thee long.

Ber. From childhood, signor,
You have been my protector : in the days
Of reckless infancy, when rank forgets,
Or, rather, is not yet taught to remember
Its cold prerogative, we play'd together ;
Our sports, our smiles, our tears, were mingled oft ;
My father was your father's client, I
His son's scarce less than foster-brother ; years
Saw us together — happy, heart-full hours !
Oh God ! the difference 'twixt those hours and this !

Lioni. Bertram, 't is thou who hast forgotten them.

Ber. Nor now, nor ever ; whatso'er betide,
I would have saved you : when to manhood's growth
We sprung, and you, devoted to the state,
As suits your station, the more humble Bertram
Was left unto the labours of the humble,
Still you forsook me not ; and if my fortunes
Have not been towering, 't was no fault of him
Who oft-times rescued and supported me,
When struggling with the tides of circumstance,
Which bear away the weaker : noble blood
Ne'er mantled in a nobler heart than thine

Has proved to me, the poor plebeian Bertram.
Would that thy fellow senators were like thee !

Lioni. Why, what hast thou to say against the senate ?

Ber. Nothing.

Lioni. I know that there are angry spirits
And turbulent mutterers of stifled treason,
Who lurk in narrow places, and walk out
Muffled to whisper curses to the night ;
Disbanded soldiers, discontented ruffians,
And desperate libertines who brawl in taverns ;
Thou herdest not with such : 't is true, of late
I have lost sight of thee, but thou wert wont
To lead a temperate life, and break thy bread
With honest mates, and bear a cheerful aspect.
What hath come to thee ? in thy hollow eye
And hueless cheek, and thine unquiet motions,
Sorrow and shame and conscience seem at war
To waste thee.

Ber. Rather shame and sorrow light
On the accursed tyranny which rides ¹
The very air in Venice, and makes men
Madden as in the last hours of the plague
Which sweeps the soul deliriously from life !

Lioni. Some villains have been tampering with thee,
Bertram ;
This is not thy old language, nor own thoughts ;
Some wretch has made thee drunk with disaffection :
But thou must not be lost so ; thou *wert* good
And kind, and art not fit for such base acts
As vice and villany would put thee to :
Confess — confide in me — thou know'st my nature —
What is it thou and thine are bound to do,
Which should prevent thy friend, the only son

¹ [“ On the accursed tyranny which faints.” — MS.]

Of him who was a friend unto thy father,
So that our good-will is a heritage
We should bequeath to our posterity
Such as ourselves received it, or augmented ;
I say, what is it thou must do, that I
Should deem thee dangerous, and keep the house
Like a sick girl ?

Ber. Nay, question me no further :
I must be gone. —

Lioni. And I be murder'd ! — say,
Was it not thus thou said'st, my gentle Bertram ?

Ber. Who talks of murder ? what said I of murder ?
'T is false ! I did not utter such a word.

Lioni. Thou didst not ; but from out thy wolfish eye.
So changed from what I knew it, there glares forth
The gladiator. If *my* life 's thine object,
Take it — I am unarmed, — and then away !
I would not hold my breath on such a tenure
As the capricious mercy of such things
As thou and those who have set thee to thy task-work.

Ber. Sooner than spill thy blood, I peril mine ;
Sooner than harm a hair of thine, I place
In jeopardy a thousand heads, and some
As noble, nay, even nobler than thine own.

Lioni. Ay, is it even so ? Excuse me, Bertram ;
I am not worthy to be singled out
From such exalted hecatombs — who are they
That *are* in danger, and that *make* the danger ?

Ber. Venice, and all that she inherits, are
Divided like a house against itself,
And so will perish ere to-morrow's twilight !

Lioni. More mysteries, and awful ones ! But now,
Or thou, or I, or both, it may be, are
Upon the verge of ruin ; speak once out,
And thou art safe and glorious ; for 't is more
Glorious to save than slay, and slay i' the dark too —

Fie, Bertram! that was not a craft for thee!
How would it look to see upon a spear
The head of him whose heart was open to thee,
Borne by thy hand before the shuddering people?
And such may be my doon; for here I swear,
Whate'er the peril or the penalty
Of thy denunciation, I go forth,
Unless thou dost detail the cause, and show
The consequence of all which led thee here!

Ber. Is there no way to save thee? minutes fly,
And thou art lost! — *thou!* my sole benefactor,
The only being who was constant to me
Through every change. Yet, make me not a traitor!
Let me save thee — but spare my honour!

Lioni. Where
Can lie the honour in a league of murder?
And who are traitors save unto the state?

Ber. A league is still a compact, and more binding
In honest hearts when words must stand for law;
And in my mind, there is no traitor like
He whose domestic treason plants the poniard
Within the breast which trusted to his truth.

Lioni. And *who* will strike the steel to mine?

Ber. Not I;
I could have wound my soul up to all things
Save this. *Thou* must not die! and think how dear
Thy life is, when I risk so many lives,
Nay, more, the life of lives, the liberty
Of future generations, *not* to be
The assassin thou miscall'st me: — once, once more
I do adjure thee, pass not o'er thy threshold!

Lioni. It is in vain — this moment I go forth.

Ber. Then perish Venice rather than my friend!
I will disclose — ensnare — betray — destroy —
Oh, what a villain I become for thee!

Lioni. Say, rather thy friend's saviour and the state's ! —

Speak — pause not — all rewards, all pledges for
Thy safety and thy welfare ; wealth such as
The state accords her worthiest servants ; nay,
Nobility itself I guarantee thee,
So that thou art sincere and penitent.

Ber. I have thought again : it must not be — I
love thee —

Thou knowest it — that I stand here is the proof,
Not least though last ; but having done my duty
By thee, I now must do it by my country !
Farewell — we meet no more in life ! — farewell !

Lioni. What, ho ! — Antonio — Pedro — to the door !
See that none pass — arrest this man ! —

Enter ANTONIO and other armed Domestics, who seize
BERTRAM.

Lioni (continues). Take care
He hath no harm ; bring me my sword and cloak ;
And man the gondola with four oars — quick —
[*Exit ANTONIO.*

We will unto Giovanni Gradenigo's,
And send for Marc Cornaro : — fear not, Bertram ;
This needful violence is for thy safety,
No less than for the general weal.

Ber. Where would'st thou
Bear me a prisoner ?

Lioni. Firstly to "the Ten ;"
Next to the Doge.

Ber. To the Doge ?

Lioni. Assuredly :
Is he not chief of the state ?

Ber. Perhaps at sunrise —

Lioni. What mean you ? — but we'll know anon.

Ber. Art sure ?

Lioni. Sure as all gentle means can make ; and if
They fail, you know " the Ten " and their tribunal,
And that St. Mark's has dungeons, and the dungeons
A rack.

Ber. Apply it then before the dawn
Now hastening into heaven. — One more such word,
And you shall perish piecemeal, by the death
You think to doom to me.

Re-enter ANTONIO.

Ant. The bark is ready,
My lord, and all prepared.

Lioni. Look to the prisoner.
Bertram, I 'll reason with thee as we go
To the Magnifico's, sage Gradenigo. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Ducal Palace. — The Doge's Apartment.

The DOGE and his Nephew BERTUCCIO FALIERO.

Doge. Are all the people of our house in muster ?

Ber. F. They are array'd, and eager for the signal,
Within our palace precincts at San Polo.¹
I come for your last orders.

Doge. It had been
As well had there been time to have got together,
From my own fief, Val di Marino, more
Of our retainers — but it is too late.

Ber. F. Methinks, my lord, 't is better as it is :
A sudden swelling of our retinue
Had waked suspicion ; and, though fierce and trusty,
The vassals of that district are too rude
And quick in quarrel to have long maintain'd

The Doge's family palace.

The secret discipline we need for such
A service, till our foes are dealt upon.

Doge. True; but when once the signal has been
given,

These are the men for such an enterprise;
These city slaves have all their private bias,
Their prejudice *against* or *for* this noble,
Which may induce them to o'erdo or spare
Where mercy may be madness; the fierce peasants,
Serfs of my county of Val di Marino,
Would do the bidding of their lord without
Distinguishing for love or hate his foes;
Alike to them Marcello or Cornaro,
A Gradenigo or a Foscari;
They are not used to start at those vain names,
Nor bow the knee before a civic senate;
A chief in armour is their Suzerain,
And not a thing in robes.

Ber. F. We are enough;
And for the dispositions of our clients
Against the senate I will answer.

Doge. Well,
The die is thrown; but for a warlike service,
Done in the field, commend me to my peasants:
They made the sun shine through the host of Huns
When sallow burghers slunk back to their tents,
And cower'd to hear their own victorious trumpet.
If there be small resistance, you will find
These citizens all lions, like their standard;
But if there's much to do, you'll wish with me,
A band of iron rustics at our backs.

Ber. F. Thus thinking, I must marvel you resolve
To strike the blow so suddenly.

Doge. Such blows
Must be struck suddenly or never. When

I had o'ermaster'd the weak false remorse
Which yearn'd about my heart, too fondly yielding
A moment to the feelings of old days,
I was most fain to strike; and, firstly, that
I might not yield again to such emotions;
And, secondly, because of all these men,
Save Israel and Philip Calendaro,
I know not well the courage or the faith:
To-day might find 'mongst them a traitor to us,
As yesterday a thousand to the senate;
But once in, with their hilts hot in their hands,
They must on for their own sakes; one stroke struck,
And the mere instinct of the first-born Cain,
Which ever lurks somewhere in human hearts,
Though circumstance may keep it in abeyance,
Will urge the rest on like to wolves; the sight
Of blood to crowds begets the thirst of more,
As the first wine-cup leads to the long revel;
And you will find a harder task to quell
Than urge them when they *have* commenced, but *till*
That moment, a mere voice, a straw, a shadow,
Are capable of turning them aside. —
How goes the night?

Ber. F. Almost upon the dawn.

Doge. Then it is time to strike upon the bell.
Are the men posted?

Ber. F. By this time they are;
But they have orders not to strike, until
They have command from you through me in person.

Doge. 'Tis well. — Will the morn never put to rest
These stars which twinkle yet o'er all the heavens?
I am settled and bound up, and being so,
The very effort which it cost me to
Resolve to cleanse this commonwealth with fire,
Now leaves my mind more steady. I have wept,

And trembled at the thought of this dread duty ;
But now I have put down all idle passion,
And look the growing tempest in the face,
As doth the pilot of an admiral galley :
Yet (wouldst thou think it, kinsman ?) it hath been
A greater struggle to me, than when nations
Beheld their fate merged in the approaching fight,
Where I was leader of a phalanx, where
Thousands were sure to perish — Yes, to spill
The rank polluted current from the veins
Of a few bloated despots needed more
To steel me to a purpose such as made
Timoleon immortal, than to face
The toils and dangers of a life of war.

Ber. F. It gladdens me to see your former wisdom
Subdue the furies which so wrung you ere
You were decided.

Doge. It was ever thus
With me ; the hour of agitation came
In the first glimmerings of a purpose, when
Passion had too much room to sway ; but in
The hour of action I have stood as calm
As were the dead who lay around me : this
They knew who made me what I am, and trusted
To the subduing power which I preserved
Over my mood, when its first burst was spent.
But they were not aware that there are things,
Which make revenge a virtue by reflection,
And not an impulse of mere anger ; though
The laws sleep, justice wakes, and injured souls
Oft do a public right with private wrong,
And justify their deeds unto themselves. —
Methinks the day breaks — is it not so ? look ;
Thine eyes are clear with youth ; — the air puts on
A morning freshness, and, at least to me,
The sea looks greyer through the lattice.

Ber. F.

True,

The morn is dappling in the sky. ¹

Doge.

Away then !

See that they strike without delay, and with
The first toll from St. Mark's, march on the palace
With all our house's strength ; here I will meet you —
The Sixteen and their companies will move
In separate columns at the self-same moment —
Be sure you post yourself at the great gate :
I would not trust " the Ten " except to us —
The rest, the rabble of patricians, may
Glut the more careless swords of those leagued with us.
Remember that the cry is still " Saint Mark !
The Genoese are come — ho ! to the rescue !
Saint Mark and Liberty ! " — Now — now to action !

Ber. F. Farewell then, noble uncle ! we will meet
In freedom and true sovereignty, or never !

Doge. Come hither, my Bertuccio — one embrace —
Speed, for the day grows broader — send me soon
A messenger to tell me how all goes
When you rejoin our troops, and then sound — sound
The storm-bell from Saint Mark's !

[*Exit BERTUCCIO FALIERO.*

Doge (solus).

He is gone, ²

And on each footstep moves a life. — 'T is done.
Now the destroying angel hovers o'er
Venice, and pauses ere he pours the vial,
Even as the eagle overlooks his prey,
And for a moment, poised in middle air,

¹ [" The night is clearing from the sky. " — MS.]

² [At last the moment arrives when the bell is to be sounded, and the whole of the conspiring bands are watching in impatience for the signal. The nephew of the Doge, and the heir of his house (for he is childless), leaves Faliero in his palace, and goes to strike with his own hand the fatal summons. The Doge is left alone ; and English poetry, we think, contains few passages superior to that which follows. — LOCKHART.]

Suspends the motion of his mighty wings,
Then swoops with his unerring beak. — 'Thou day !
That slowly walk'st the waters ! march — march on —
I would not smite i' the dark, but rather see
That no stroke errs. And you, ye blue sea waves !
I have seen you dyed ere now, and deeply too,
With Genoese, Saracen, and Hunnish gore,
While that of Venice flow'd too, but victorious ;
Now thou must wear an unmix'd crimson ; no
Barbaric blood can reconcile us now
Unto that horrible incarnadine,
But friend or foe will roll in civic slaughter.
And have I lived to fourscore years for this ?
I, who was named Preserver of the City ?
I, at whose name the million's caps were flung
Into the air, and cries from tens of thousands
Rose up, imploring Heaven to send me blessings,
And fame, and length of days — to see this day ?
But this day, black within the calendar,
Shall be succeeded by a bright millennium.
Doge Dandolo survived to ninety summers
To vanquish empires, and refuse their crown ;
I will resign a crown, and make the state
Renew its freedom — but oh ! by what means ?
The noble end must justify them — What
Are a few drops of human blood ? 't is false,
The blood of tyrants is not human ; they,
Like to incarnate Molochs, feed on ours,
Until 't is time to give them to the tombs
Which they have made so populous. — Oh world !
Oh men ! what are ye, and our best designs,
That we must work by crime to punish crime ?
And slay as if Death had but this one gate,
When a few years would make the sword superfluous ?
And I, upon the verge of th' unknown realm,
Yet send so many heralds on before me ? —

I must not ponder this.

[*A pause.*

Hark ! was there not

A murmur as of distant voices, and
 The tramp of feet in martial unison ?
 What phantoms even of sound our wishes raise !
 It cannot be — the signal hath not rung —
 Why pauses it ? My nephew's messenger
 Should be upon his way to me, and he
 Himself perhaps even now draws grating back
 Upon its ponderous hinge the steep tower portal.
 Where swings the sullen huge oracular bell, ¹
 Which never knells but for a princely death,
 Or for a state in peril, pealing forth
 Tremendous bodements ; let it do its office,
 And be this peal its awfulest and last
 Sound till the strong tower rock ! — What ! silent still ?
 I would go forth, but that my post is here,
 To be the centre of re-union to
 The oft discordant elements which form
 Leagues of this nature, and to keep compact
 The wavering of the weak, in case of conflict ;
 For if they should do battle, 't will be here,
 Within the palace, that the strife will thicken :
 Then here must be my station, as becomes
 The master-mover. — Hark ! he comes — he comes,
 My nephew, brave Bertuccio's messenger. —
 What tidings ? Is he marching ? hath he sped ? —
 They here ! — all's lost — yet will I make an effort. ²

¹ [“ Where swings the sullen { iron oracle.
 huge oracular bell.”— MS.]

² [A relenting conspirator, whom the contemplative Lion had formerly befriended, calls to warn him of his danger ; and is gradually led to betray his associates. The plot is crushed in the moment of its development, and the Doge arrested in his palace. The scene immediately preceding this catastrophe is noble and thrilling. — JEFFREY.]

Enter a SIGNOR OF THE NIGHT,¹ with Guards, &c. &c.

Sig. Doge, I arrest thee of high treason !

Doge.

Me !

Thy prince, of treason ? — Who are they that dare
Cloak their own treason under such an order ?

Sig. (showing his order). Behold my order from
the assembled Ten.

Doge. And *where* are they, and *why* assembled ? no
Such council can be lawful, till the prince
Preside there, and that duty's mine : on thine
I charge thee, give me way, or marshal me
'To the council chamber.

Sig. Duke ! it may not be :
Nor are they in the wonted Hall of Council,
But sitting in the convent of Saint Saviour's.

Doge. You dare to disobey me, then ?

Sig.

I serve

The state, and needs must serve it faithfully ;
My warrant is the will of those who rule it.

Doge. And till that warrant has my signature
It is illegal, and, as *now* applied,
Rebellious — Hast thou weigh'd well thy life's worth,
'That thus you dare assume a lawless function ?²

Sig. 'Tis not my office to reply, but act —
I am placed here as guard upon thy person,
And not as judge to hear or to decide.

Doge (aside). I must gain time — So that the
storm-bell sound,
All may be well yet. — Kinsman, speed — speed —
speed ! —
Our fate is trembling in the balance, and

¹ [" I Signori di Notte " held an important charge in the old republic.]

² [" That thus you dare assume a brigand's power." — MS.]

Woe to the vanquish'd ! be they prince and people,
Or slaves and senate —

[*The great bell of Saint Mark's tolls.*

Lo ! it sounds — it tolls !

Doge (*aloud*). Hark, Signor of the Night ! and
you, ye hirelings,

Who wield your mercenary staves in fear,
It is your knell — Swell on, thou lusty peal !
Now knaves, what ransom for your lives ?

Sig.

Confusion !

Stand to your arms, and guard the door — all 's lost
Unless that fearful bell be silenced soon.

The officer hath miss'd his path or purpose,
Or met some unforeseen and hidcous obstacle. ¹

Anselmo, with thy company proceed
Straight to the tower ; the rest remain with me.

[*Exit part of the Guard.*

Doge. Wretch ! if thou wouldst have thy vile life,
implore it ;

It is not now a lease of sixty seconds.

Ay, send thy miserable ruffians forth ;

They never shall return.

Sig.

So let it be !

They die then in their duty, as will I.

Doge. Fool ! the high eagle flies at nobler game
Than thou and thy base myrmidons, — live on,
So thou provok'st not peril by resistance,
And learn (if souls so much obscured can bear
To gaze upon the sunbeams) to be free.

Sig. And learn thou to be captive — It hath ceased,

[*The bell ceases to toll.*

The traitorous signal, which was to have set

The bloodhound mob on their patrician prey —

The knell hath rung, but it is not the senate's !

¹ " [Or met some unforeseen and fatal obstacle.] — MS.]

Doge (after a pause). All 's silent, and all 's lost !

Sig. Now, Doge, denounce me
As rebel slave of a revolted council !
Have I not done my duty ?

Doge. Peace, thou thing !
Thou hast done a worthy deed, and earn'd the price
Of blood, and they who use thee will reward thee.
But thou wert sent to watch, and not to prate,
As thou said'st even now — then do thine office,
But let it be in silence, as behoves thee,
Since, though thy prisoner, I am thy prince.

Sig. I did not mean to fail in the respect
Due to your rank : in this I shall obey you.

Doge (aside). There now is nothing left me save to
die ;
And yet how near success ! I would have fallen,
And proudly, in the hour of triumph, but
To miss it thus !——

*Enter other SIGNORS OF THE NIGHT, with BERTUCCIO
FALIERO prisoner.*

2d Sig. We took him in the act
Of issuing from the tower, where, at his order,
As delegated from the Doge, the signal
Had thus begun to sound.

1st Sig. Are all the passes
Which lead up to the palace well secured ?

2d Sig. They are — besides, it matters not ; the
chiefs
Are all in chains, and some even now on trial —
Their followers are dispersed, and many taken.

Ber. F. Uncle !

Doge. It is in vain to war with Fortune ;
The glory hath departed from our house.

Ber. F. Who would have deem'd it ? — Ah ! one
moment sooner !

Doge. That moment would have changed the face of
ages ;

This gives us to eternity — We'll meet it
As men whose triumph is not in success,
But who can make their own minds all in all,
Equal to every fortune. Droop not, 't is
But a brief passage — I would go alone,
Yet if they send us, as 't is like, together,
Let us go worthy of our sires and selves.

Ber. F. I shall not shame you, uncle.

1st Sig. Lords, our orders
Are to keep guard on both in separate chambers,
Until the council call ye to your trial.

Doge. Our trial ! will they keep their mockery up
Even to the last ? but let them deal upon us,
As we had dealt on them, but with less pomp.
'T is but a game of mutual homicides,
Who have cast lots for the first death, and they
Have won with false dice. — Who hath been our
Judas ?

1st Sig. I am not warranted to answer that.

Ber. F. I'll answer for thee — 't is a certain Bertram,
Even now deposing to the secret giunta.

Doge. Bertram, the Bergamask ! With what vile
tools

We operate to slay or save ! This creature,
Black with a double treason, now will earn
Rewards and honours, and be stamp'd in story
With the geese in the Capitol, which gabbled
Till Rome awoke, and had an annual triumph,
While Manlius, who hurl'd down the Gauls, was cast¹
From the Tarpeian.

1st Sig. He aspired to treason,
And sought to rule the state.

¹ [“ While Manlius, who hurl'd back the Gauls,” &c. — MS.]

Doge. He saved the state,
And sought but to reform what he revived —
But this is idle — Come, sirs, do your work.

1st Sig. Noble Bertuccio, we must now remove you
Into an inner chamber.

Ber. F. Farewell, uncle !
If we shall meet again in life I know not,
But they perhaps will let our ashes mingle.

Doge. Yes, and our spirits, which shall yet go forth,
And do what our frail clay, thus clogg'd, hath fail'd in !
They cannot quench the memory of those
Who would have hurl'd them from their guilty thrones,
And such examples will find heirs, though distant.

ACT V

SCENE I.

The Hall of the Council of Ten assembled with the additional Senators, who, on the Trials of the Conspirators for the Treason of MARINO FALIERO, composed what was called the Giunta, — Guards, Officers, &c. &c. — ISRAEL BERTUCCIO and PHILIP CALENDARO as Prisoners. — BERTRAM, LIONI, and Witnesses, &c. ¹

The Chief of the Ten, BENINTENDE. ²

Ben. There now rests, after such conviction of
Their manifold and manifest offences,

[The fifth Act, which begins with the arraignment of the original conspirators, is much in the style of that of Pierre and his associates in the old play. After them, the Doge is brought in: his part is very forcibly written throughout. — JEFFREY.]

² ["In the notes to Marino Fallero, it may be as well as to say, that Benintende was not really of the Ten, but merely Grand Chancellor — a separate office, though an important one. It was an arbitrary alteration of mine." — *Byron Letters.*]

But to pronounce on these obdurate men
 The sentence of the law : — a grievous task
 To those who hear, and those who speak. Alas !
 That it should fall to me ! and that my days
 Of office should be stigmatised through all
 The years of coming time, as bearing record
 To this most foul and complicated treason
 Against a just and free state, known to all
 The earth as being the Christian bulwark 'gainst
 The Saracen and the schismatic Greek,
 The savage Hun, and not less barbarous Frank ;
 A city which has open'd India's wealth
 To Europe ; the last Roman refuge from
 O'erwhelming Attila ; the ocean's queen ;
 Proud Genoa's prouder rival ! 'Tis to sap
 The throne of such a city, these lost men
 Have risk'd and forfeited their worthless lives —
 So let them die the death.

I. Ber. We are prepared ;
 Your racks have done that for us. Let us die.

Ben. If ye have that to say which would obtain
 Abatement of your punishment, the Giunta
 Will hear you ; if you have aught to confess,
 Now is your time, perhaps it may avail ye.

Ber. F. We stand to hear, and not to speak.

Ben. Your crimes
 Are fully proved by your accomplices,
 And all which circumstance can add to aid them ;
 Yet we would hear from your own lips complete
 Avowal of your treason : on the verge
 Of that dread gulf which none repass, the truth
 Alone can profit you on earth or heaven —
 Say, then, what was your motive ?

I. Ber. Justice !

Ben. What
 Your object ?

I. Ber. Freedom !

Ben. You are brief, sir.

I. Ber. So my life grows : I
Was bred a soldier, not a senator.

Ben. Perhaps you think by this blunt brevity
To brave your judges to postpone the sentence ?

I. Ber. Do you be brief as I am, and believe me,
I shall prefer that mercy to your pardon.

Ben. Is this your sole reply to the tribunal ?

I. Ber. Go, ask your racks what they have wrung
from us,

Or place us there again ; we have still some blood left,
And some slight sense of pain in these wretch'd limbs :
But this ye dare not do ; for if we die there —

And you have left us little life to spend
Upon your engines, gorged with pangs already —

Ye lose the public spectacle, with which
You would appal your slaves to further slavery !

Groans are not words, nor agony assent,

Nor affirmation truth, if nature's sense

Should overcome the soul into a lie,

For a short respite — must we bear or die ?

Ben. Say, who were your accomplices ?

I. Ber. The Senate.

Ben. What do you mean ?

I. Ber. Ask of the suffering people,
Whom your patrician crimes have driven to crime.

Ben. You know the Doge ?

I. Ber. I served with him at Zara
In the field, when *you* were pleading here your way
To present office ; we exposed our lives,
While you but hazarded the lives of others,
Alike by accusation or defence ;
And for the rest, all Venice knows her Doge,
Through his great actions, and the Senate's insults.

Ben. You have held conference with him ?

I. Ber. I am weary —
Even wearier of your questions than your tortures :
I pray you pass to judgment.

Ben. It is coming. —
And you, too, Philip Calendaro, what
Have you to say why you should not be doomed ?

Cal. I never was a man of many words,
And now have few left worth the utterance.

Ben. A further application of yon engine
May change your tone.

Cal. Most true, it *will* do so ;
A former application did so ; but
It will not change my words, or, if it did —

Ben. What then ?

Cal. Will my avowal on yon rack
Stand good in law ?

Ben. Assuredly.

Cal. Whoe'er
The culprit be whom I accuse of treason ?

Ben. Without doubt, he will be brought up to trial.

Cal. And on this testimony would he perish ?

Ben. So your confession be detail'd and full,
He will stand here in peril of his life.

Cal. Then look well to thy proud self, President !
For by the eternity which yawns before me,
I swear that *thou*, and only thou, shalt be
The traitor I denounce upon that rack,
If I be stretch'd there for the second time.

One of the Giunta. Lord President, 't were best pro-
ceed to judgment ;
There is no more to be drawn from these men.

Ben. Unhappy men ! prepare for instant death.
The nature of your crime — our law — and peril
The state now stands in, leave not an hour's respite —
Guards ! lead them forth, and upon the balcony

Of the red columns, where, on festal Thursday,¹
The Doge stands to behold the chase of bulls,
Let them be justified: and leave exposed
Their wavering reliës, in the place of judgment,
To the full view of the assembled people! —
And Heaven have mercy on their souls!

The Giunta.

Amen!

I. Ber. Signors, farewell! we shall not all again
Meet in one place.

Ben. And lest they should essay
To stir up the distracted multitude —
Guards! let their mouths be gagged² even in the act
Of execution. — Lead them hence!

Cal. What! must we
Not even say farewell to some fond friend,
Nor leave a last word with our confessor?

Ben. A priest is waiting in the antechamber;
But, for your friends, such interviews would be
Painful to them, and useless all to you.

Cal. I knew that we were gagged in life; at least
All those who had not heart to risk their lives
Upon their open thoughts; but still I deem'd
That in the last few moments, the same idle
Freedom of speech accorded to the dying,
Would not now be denied to us; but since —

I. Ber. Even let them have their way, brave Cal-
lendaro!

What matter a few syllables? let's die
Without the slightest show of favour from them;
So shall our blood more readily arise
To Heaven against them, and more testify
To their atrocities, than could a volume

¹ "Giovedì grasso," — "fat or greasy Thursday," — which I cannot literally translate in the text, was the day.

² Historical fact. See Sanuto, APPENDIX, Note (A).

Spoken or written of our dying words !
 They tremble at our voices — nay, they dread
 Our very silence — let them live in fear ! —
 Leave them unto their thoughts, and let us now
 Address our own above ! — Lead on ; we are ready.

Cal. Israel, hadst thou but hearken'd unto me
 It had not now been thus ; and yon pale villain,
 The coward Bertram, would ——

I. Ber. Peace, Calendaro !

What brooks it now to ponder upon this ?

Bert. Alas ! I fain you died in peace with me :
 I did not seek this task ; 't was forced upon me :
 Say, you forgive me, though I never can
 Retrieve my own forgiveness — frown not thus !

I. Ber. I die and pardon thee !

Cal. (*spitting at him*).¹ I die and scorn thee !

[*Exeunt ISRAEL BERTUCCIO and PHILIP CALEN-*
DARO, Guards, &c.]

¹ [“ I know what Foscolo means, about Calendaro's *spitting at* Bertram ; *that's* national — the objection, I mean. The Italians and French, with those ‘ flags of abomination ’ their pocket handkerchiefs, spit there, and here, and every where else — in your face almost, and therefore *object* to it on the stage as *too familiar*. But we who spit nowhere — but in a man's face when we grow savage — are not likely to feel this. Remember Massinger, and Kean's Sir Giles Overreach —

‘ Lord ! *thus* I spit at thee and at thy counsel ! ’

Besides, Calendaro does not spit in Bertram's face ; he spits *at* him, as I have seen the Mussulmans do upon the ground when they are in a rage. Again, he does not in fact despise Bertram, though he affects it, — as we all do, when angry with one we think our inferior. He is angry at not being allowed to die in his own way (although not afraid of death) ; and recollect that he suspected and hated Bertram from the first. Israel Bertuccio, on the other hand, is a cooler and more concentrated fellow : he acts upon *principle* and impulse ; Calendaro upon *impulse* and example. So there's argument for you. — ‘ The Doge *repeats* ; ’ — true, but it's from engrossing passion, and because he sees *different* persons, and is always obliged to recur to the *cause* uppermost in his mind. ‘ His speeches are long ; ’ — true, but I wrote for the *closet*, and on the French and Italian model rather than

Ben. Now that these criminals have been disposed of,
'Tis time that we proceed to pass our sentence
Upon the greatest traitor upon record
In any annals, the Doge Faliero !
The proofs and process are complete ; the time
And crime require a quick procedure : shall
He now be call'd in to receive the award ?

The Giunta. Ay, ay.

Ben. Avogadori, order that the Doge
Be brought before the council.

One of the Giunta. And the rest,
When shall they be brought up ?

Ben. When all the chiefs
Have been disposed of. Some have fled to Chiozza ;
But there are thousands in pursuit of them,
And such precaution ta'en on terra firma,
As well as in the islands, that we hope
None will escape to utter in strange lands
His libellous tale of treasons 'gainst the senate.

Enter the DOGE as Prisoner, with Guards, &c. &c.

Ben. Doge — for such still you are, and by the law
Must be consider'd, till the hour shall come
When you must doff the ducal bonnet from
That head, which could not wear a crown more noble
Than empires can confer, in quiet honour,
But it must plot to overthrow your peers,
Who made you what you are, and quench in blood
A city's glory — we have laid already
Before you in your chamber at full length,
By the Avogadori, all the proofs
Which have appear'd against you ; and more ample
Ne'er rear'd their sanguinary shadows to

yours, which I think not very highly of, for all your *old* dramatists,
who are long enough too, God knows." — *Byron Letters.*]

Confront a traitor. What have you to say
In your defence?

Doge. What shall I say to ye,
Since my defence must be your condemnation?
You are at once offenders and accusers,
Judges and executioners! — Proceed
Upon your power.

Ben. Your chief accomplices
Having confess'd, there is no hope for you.

Doge. And who be they?

Ben. In number many; but
The first now stands before you in the court,
Bertram, of Bergamo, — would you question him?

Doge (*looking at him contemptuously*). No.

Ben. And two others, Israel Bertuccio,
And Philip Calendaro, have admitted
Their fellowship in treason with the Doge!

Doge. And where are they?

Ben. Gone to their place, and now
Answering to Heaven for what they did on earth.

Doge. Ah! the plebeian Brutus, is he gone?
And the quick Cassius of the arsenal? —
How did they meet their doom?

Ben. Think of your own:
It is approaching. You decline to plead, then?

Doge. I cannot plead to my inferiors, nor
Can recognise your legal power to try me.
Show me the law!

Ben. On great emergencies,
The law must be remodell'd or amended:
Our fathers had not fix'd the punishment
Of such a crime, as on the old Roman tables
The sentence against parricide was left
In pure forgetfulness; they could not render
That penal, which had neither name nor thought
In their great bosoms; who would have foreseen

That nature could be filed to such a crime
As sons 'gainst sires, and princes 'gainst their realms?
Your sin hath made us make a law which will
Become a precedent 'gainst such haught traitors,
As would with treason mount to tyranny;
Not even contented with a sceptre, till
They can convert it to a two-edged sword!
Was not the place of Doge sufficient for ye?
What's nobler than the signory of Venice?

Doge. The signory of Venice! You betray'd me —
You — you, who sit there, traitors as ye are!
From my equality with you in birth,
And my superiority in action,
You drew me from my honourable toils
In distant lands — on flood — in field — in cities —
You singled me out like a victim to
Stand crown'd, but bound and helpless, at the altar
Where you alone could minister. I knew not —
I sought not — wish'd not — dream'd not the election,
Which reach'd me first at Rome, and I obey'd;
But found on my arrival, that, besides
The jealous vigilance which always led you
To mock and mar your sovereign's best intents,
You had, even in the interregnum of ¹

¹ [One source of feebleness in this passage, and it is one of frequent occurrence in all Lord Byron's plays, is his practice of ending his lines with insignificant monosyllables. "*Of*," "*to*," "*and*," "*till*," "*but*," "*from*," all concur in the course of a very few pages, in situations where, had the harmony or vigour of the line been consulted, the voice would have been allowed to pause, and the energy of the sentiment would have been carried to its highest tone of elevation. This we should have set down to the account of carelessness, had it not been so frequent, and had not the stiffness and labour of the author's general style almost tempted us to believe it systematic. A more inharmonious system of versification could hardly have been invented. But with all these defects, there is much to praise in the Doge of Venice.—
HERER.]

My journey to the capital, curtail'd
And mutilated the few privileges
Yct left the duke : all this I bore, and would
I have borne, until my very hearth was stain'd
By the pollution of your ribaldry,
And he, the ribald, whom I see amongst you —
Fit judge in such tribunal ! ——

Ben. (interrupting him). Michel Steno
Is here in virtue of his office, as
One of the Forty ; “ the Ten ” having craved
A Giunta of patricians from the senate
To aid our judgment in a trial arduous
And novel as the present : he was set
Free from the penalty pronounced upon him,
Because the Doge, who should protect the law,
Seeking to abrogate all law, can claim
No punishment of others by the statutes
Which he himself denies and violates !

Doge. His PUNISHMENT ! I rather see him *there*,
Where he now sits, to glut him with my death,
Than in the mockery of castigation,
Which your foul, outward, juggling show of justice
Decreed as sentence ! Base as was his crime,
'T was purity compared with your protection.

Ben. And can it be, that the great Doge of Venice,
With three parts of a century of years
And honours on his head, could thus allow
His fury, like an angry boy's, to master
All feeling, wisdom, faith, and fear, on such
A provocation as a young man's petulance ?

Doge. A spark creates the flame — 't is the last drop
Which makes the cup run o'er, and mine was full
Already : you oppress'd the prince and people ;
I would have freed both, and have fail'd in both :
The price of such success would have been glory,
Vengeance, and victory, and such a name

As would have made Venetian history
Rival to that of Greece and Syracuse
When they were freed, and flourish'd ages after,
And mine to Gelon and to Thrasybulus: —
Failing, I know the penalty of failure
Is present infamy and death — the future
Will judge, when Venice is no more, or free;
Till then, the truth is in abeyance. Pause not;
I would have shown no mercy, and I seek none;
My life was staked upon a mighty hazard,
And being lost, take what I would have taken!
I would have stood alone amidst your tombs:
Now you may flock round mine, and trample on it,
As you have done upon my heart while living.

Ben. You do confess then, and admit the justice
Of our tribunal?

Doge. I confess to have fail'd;
Fortune is female: from my youth her favours
Were not withheld, the fault was mine to hope
Her former smiles again at this late hour.

Ben. You do not then in aught arraign our equity?

Doge. Noble Venetians! stir me not with questions.
I am resign'd to the worst; but in me still
Have something of the blood of brighter days,
And am not over-patient. Pray you, spare me
Further interrogation, which boots nothing,
Except to turn a trial to debate.
I shall but answer that which will offend you,
And please your enemies — a host already;
'T is true, these sullen walls should yield no echo:
But walls have ears — nay, more, they have tongues;
and if
There were no other way for truth to o'erleap them,¹
You who condemn me, you who fear and slay me,

¹ ["There were no other way for truth to pierce them."—MS.]

Yet could not bear in silence to your graves
 What you would hear from me of good or evil ;
 The secret were too mighty for your souls :
 Then let it sleep in mine, unless you court
 A danger which would double that you escape.
 Such my defence would be, had I full scope
 To make it famous ; for true *words* are *things*,
 And dying men's are things which long outlive,
 And oftentimes avenge them ; bury mine,
 If ye would fain survive me : take this counsel,
 And though too oft ye made me live in wrath,
 Let me die calmly ; you may grant me this ; —
 I deny nothing — defend nothing — nothing
 I ask of you, but silence for myself,
 And sentence from the court !

Ben.

This full admission

Spares us the harsh necessity of ordering
 The torture to elicit the whole truth.¹

Doge. The torture ! you have put me there already,
 Daily since I was Doge ; but if you will
 Add the corporeal rack, you may : these limbs
 Will yield with age to crushing iron ; but
 There's that within my heart shall strain your engines.

Enter an OFFICER.

Officer. Noble Venetians ! Duchess Faliero²
 Requests admission to the Giunta's presence.

Ben. Say, conscript fathers,³ shall she be admitted ?

¹ [“ The torture { for the exposure of the truth.
 to elicit the whole truth.” — MS.

² [“ Noble Venetians ! { Doge Faliero's consort.
 with respect the Duchess.” — MS.]

³ The Venetian senate took the same title as the Roman, of
 “ conscript fathers.”

One of the Giunta. She may have revelations of
importance
Unto the state, to justify compliance
With her request.

Ben. Is this the general will?

All. It is.

Doge. Oh, admirable laws of Venice!
Which would admit the wife, in the full hope
That she might testify against the husband.
What glory to the chaste Venetian dames!
But such blasphemers 'gainst all honour, as
Sit here, do well to act in their vocation.
Now, villain Steno! if this woman fail,
I'll pardon thee thy lie, and thy escape,
And my own violent death, and thy vile life.

The Duchess enters. ¹

Ben. Lady! this just tribunal has resolved,
Though the request be strange, to grant it, and
Whatever be its purport, to accord
A patient hearing with the due respect

¹ [The drama, which has the merit, uncommon in modern performances, of embodying no episodial deformity whatever, now hurries in full career to its close. Everything is despatched with the stern decision of a tyrannical aristocracy. There is no hope of mercy on any side,—there is no petition,—nay, there is no wish for mercy. Even the plebeian conspirators have too much Venetian blood in them to be either scared by the approach, or shaken in the moment, of death: and as for the Doge, he bears himself as becomes a warrior of sixty years, and a deeply insulted prince. At the moment, however, which immediately precedes the pronouncing of the sentence, admission is asked and obtained by one from whom less of the Spartan firmness might have been expected. This is Angiolina. She indeed hazards one fervent prayer to the unbending senate; but she sees in a moment that it is in vain, and she recovers herself on the instant; and turning to her lord, who stands calm and collected at the foot of the council table, speaks words worthy of him and of her. Nothing can be more unexpected, or more beautiful, than the behaviour of the young patrician who interrupts their conversation. —LOCKHART.]

Which fits your ancestry, your rank, and virtues :
But you turn pale — ho ! there, look to the lady !
Place a chair instantly.

Ang. A moment's faintness —
'T is past ; I pray you pardon me, — I sit not
In presence of my prince and of my husband,
While he is on his feet.

Ben. Your pleasure, lady ?

Ang. Strange rumours, but most true, if all I hear
And see be sooth, have reach'd me, and I come
'To know the worst, even at the worst ; forgive
The abruptness of my entrance and my bearing.
Is it — I cannot speak — I cannot shape
The question — but you answer it ere spoken,
With eyes averted, and with gloomy brows —
Oh God ! this is the silence of the grave !

Ben. (*after a pause*). Spare us, and spare thyself
the repetition
Of our most awful, but inexorable
Duty to Heaven and man !

Ang. Yet speak ; I cannot —
I cannot — no — even now believe these things.
Is he condemn'd ?

Ben. Alas !

Ang. And was he guilty ?

Ben. Lady ! the natural distraction of
Thy thoughts at such a moment makes the question
Merit forgiveness ; else a doubt like this
Against a just and paramount tribunal
Were deep offence. But question even the Doge,
And if he can deny the proofs, believe him
Guiltless as thy own bosom.

Ang. Is it so ?
My lord — my sovereign — my poor father's friend —
The mighty in the field, the sage in council ;
Unsay the words of this man ! — Thou art silent !

Ben. He hath already own'd to his own guilt,¹
Nor, as thou see'st, doth he deny it now.

Ang. Ay, but he must not die ! Spare his few years,
Which grief and shaine will soon cut down to days !
One day of baffled crime must not efface
Near sixteen lustres crowded with brave acts.

Ben. His doom must be fulfill'd without remission
Of time or penalty — 't is a decree.

Ang. He hath been guilty, but there may be mercy.

Ben. Not in this case with justice.

Ang. Alas ! signor,
He who is only just is cruel ; who
Upon the earth would live were all judged justly ?

Ben. His punishment is safety to the state.

Ang. He was a subject, and hath served the state ;
He was your general, and hath saved the state ;
He is your sovereign, and hath ruled the state.

One of the Council. He is a traitor, and betray'd
the state.

Ang. And, but for him, there now had been no state
To save or to destroy ; and you, who sit
There to pronounce the death of your deliverer,
Had now been groaning at a Moslem oar,
Or digging in the Hunnish mines in fetters !

One of the Council. No, lady, there are others who
would die
Rather than breathe in slavery !

Ang. If there are so
Within these walls, thou art not of the number :
The truly brave are generous to the fallen ! —
Is there no hope ?

Ben. Lady, it cannot be.

Ang. (turning to the Doge). Then die, Faliero ! since
it must be so ;

¹ [“ He hath already granted his own guilt.” — MS.]

But with the spirit of my father's friend.
Thou hast been guilty of a great offence,
Half cancell'd by the harshness of these men.
I would have sued to them — have pray'd to them —
Have begg'd as famish'd mendicants for bread —
Have wept as they will cry unto their God
For mercy, and be answer'd as they answer, —
Had it been fitting for thy name or mine,
And if the cruelty in their cold eyes
Had not announced the heartless wrath within.
Then, as a prince, address thee to thy doom !

Doge. I have lived too long not to know how to die !
Thy suing to these men were but the bleating
Of the lamb to the butcher, or the cry
Of seamen to the surge : I would not take
A life eternal, granted at the hands
Of wretches, from whose monstrous villanies
I sought to free the groaning nations !

Michel Steno.

Doge,

A word with thee, and with this noble lady,
Whom I have grievously offended. Would
Sorrow, or shame, or penance on my part,
Could cancel the inexorable past !
But since that cannot be, as Christians let us
Say farewell, and in peace : with full contrition
I crave, not pardon, but compassion from you,
And give, however weak, my prayers for both.

Ang. Sage Benintende, now chief judge of Venice,
I speak to thee in answer to yon signor.
Inform the ribald Steno, that his words
Ne'er weigh'd in mind with Loredano's daughter,
Further than to create a moment's pity
For such as he is : would that others had
Despised him as I pity ! I prefer
My honour to a thousand lives, could such
Be multiplied in mine, but would not have

A single life of others lost for that
Which nothing human can impugn — the sense
Of virtue, looking not to what is call'd
A good name for reward, but to itself.
To me the scorner's words were as the wind
Unto the rock : but as there are — alas !
Spirits more sensitive, on which such things
Light as the whirlwind on the waters ; souls
To whom dishonour's shadow is a substance
More terrible than death, here and hereafter ;
Men whose vice is to start at vice's scoffing,
And who, though proof against all blandishments
Of pleasure, and all pangs of pain, are feeble
When the proud name on which they pinnacled
Their hopes is breathed on, jealous as the eagle
Of her high airy ; let what we now
Behold, and feel, and suffer, be a lesson
To wretches how they tamper in their spleen
With beings of a higher order. Insects
Have made the lion mad ere now ; a shaft
I' the heel o'erthrew the bravest of the brave ;
A wife's dishonour was the bane of Troy ;
A wife's dishonour unking'd Rome for ever ;
An injured husband brought the Gauls to Clusium,
And thence to Rome, which perish'd for a time ;
An obscene gesture cost Caligula
His life, while Earth yet bore his cruelties ;
A virgin's wrong made Spain a Moorish province ;
And Steno's lie, couch'd in two worthless lines,
Hath decimated Venice, put in peril
A senate which hath stood eight hundred years,
Discrown'd a prince, cut off his crownless head,
And forged new fetters for a groaning people !
Let the poor wretch, like to the courtesan
Who fired Persepolis, be proud of this,
If it so please him — 't were a pride fit for him !

But let him not insult the last hours of
Him, who, whate'er he now is, *was* a hero,
By the intrusion of his very prayers;
Nothing of good can come from such a source,
Nor would we aught with him, nor now, nor ever :
We leave him to himself, that lowest depth
Of human baseness. Pardon is for men,
And not for reptiles — we have none for Steno,
And no resentment : things like him must sting,
And higher beings suffer ; 't is the charter
Of life. The man who dies by the adder's fang
May have the crawler crush'd, but feels no anger :
'T was the worm's nature ; and some men are worms
In soul, more than the living things of tombs.¹

Doge (to Ben.). Signor ! complete that which you
deem your duty.

Ben. Before we can proceed upon that duty,
We would request the princess to withdraw ;
'T will move her too much to be witness to it.

Ang. I know it will, and yet I must endure it,
For 't is a part of mine — I will not quit,
Except by force, my husband's side. — Proceed '
Nay, fear not either shriek, or sigh, or tear ;

¹ [The Duchess is formal and cold, without even that degree of love for her old husband which a child might have for her parent, or a pupil for her instructor. Even in this her longest and best speech, at the most touching moment of the catastrophe, she can moralise in a strain of pedantry less natural to a woman than to any other person similarly circumstanced, on lions stung by gnats, Achilles, Helen, Lucretia, the siege of Clusium, Caligula, Caaba, and Persepolis ! The lines are fine in themselves, indeed ; and if they had been spoken by Benintende as a funeral oration over the Duke's body, or still more, perhaps, if they had been spoken by the Duke's counsel on his trial, they would have been perfectly in place and character. But that is not the highest order of female intellect which is disposed to be long-winded in distress ; nor does any one, either male or female, who is deeply affected, find time for wise saws and instances ancient and modern. — HEBER.]

Though my heart burst, it shall be silent. — Speak !
I have that within which shall o'ermaster all.

Ben. Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice,
Count of Val di Marino, Senator,
And some time General of the Fleet and Army,
Noble Venetian, many times and oft
Intrusted by the state with high employments,
Even to the highest, listen to the sentence.
Convict by many witnesses and proofs,
And by thine own confession, of the guilt
Of treachery and treason, yet unheard of
Until this trial — the decree is death.
Thy goods are confiscate unto the state,
Thy name is razed from out her records, save
Upon a public day of thanksgiving
For this our most miraculous deliverance,
When thou art noted in our calendars
With earthquakes, pestilence, and foreign foes,
And the great enemy of man, as subject
Of grateful masses for Heaven's grace in snatching
Our lives and country from thy wickedness.
The place wherein as Doge thou shouldst be painted,
With thine illustrious predecessors, is
To be left vacant, with a death-black veil
Flung over these dim words engraved beneath, —
“ This place is of Marino Faliero,
Decapitated for his crimes.”

Doge.

“ His crimes ! ”

But let it be so : — it will be in vain.
The veil which blackens o'er this blighted name,
And hides, or seems to hide, these lineaments,
Shall draw more gazers than the thousand portraits
Which glitter round it in their pictured trappings —
Your delegated slaves — the people's tyrants !
“ Decapitated for his crimes ! ” — *What crimes ?*
Were it not better to record the facts,

So that the contemplator might approve,
Or at the least learn *whence* the crimes arose?
When the beholder knows a Doge conspired,
Let him be told the cause — it is your history.

Ben. Time must reply to that; our sons will judge
Their fathers' judgment, which I now pronounce.
As Doge, clad in the ducal robes and cap,
Thou shalt be led hence to the Giants' Staircase,
Where thou and all our princes are invested;
And there the ducal crown being first resumed
Upon the spot where it was first assumed,
Thy head shall be struck off; and Heaven have mercy
Upon thy soul!

Doge. Is this the Giunta's sentence?

Ben. It is.

Doge. I can endure it. — And the time?

Ben. Must be immediate. — Make thy peace with
God:

Within an hour thou must be in His presence.

Doge. I am already; and my blood will rise
To Heaven before the souls of those who shed it. —
Are all my lands confiscated?

Ben. They are;
And goods, and jewels, and all kind of treasure,
Except two thousand ducats — these dispose of.

Doge. That's harsh. — I would have fain reserved
the lands

Near to Treviso, which I hold by investment
From Laurence the Count-bishop of Ceneda,
In fief perpetual to myself and heirs,
To portion them (leaving my city spoil,
My palace and my treasures, to your forfeit)
Between my consort and my kinsmen.

Ben. These
Lie under the state's ban; their chief, thy nephew,
In peril of his own life; but the council

Postpones his trial for the present. If
Thou wilt a state unto thy widow'd princess,
Fear not, for we will do her justice.

Ang. Signors,
I share not in your spoil! From henceforth, know
I am devoted unto God alone,
And take my refuge in the cloister.

Doge. Come!
The hour may be a hard one, but 't will end.
Have I aught else to undergo save death?

Ben. You have nought to do, except confess and die.
The priest is robed, the scimitar is bare,
And both await without. — But, above all,
Think not to speak unto the people; they
Are now by thousands swarming at the gates,
But these are closed: the Ten, the Avogadori,
The Giunta, and the chief men of the Forty,
Alone will be beholders of thy doom,
And they are ready to attend the Doge.

Doge. The Doge!

Ben. Yes, Doge, thou hast lived and thou shalt die
A sovereign; till the moment which precedes
The separation of that head and trunk,
That ducal crown and head shall be united.
Thou hast forgot thy dignity in deigning
To plot with petty traitors; not so we,
Who in the very punishment acknowledge
The prince. Thy vile accomplices have died
The dog's death, and the wolf's; but thou shalt fall
As falls the lion by the hunters, girt
By those who feel a proud compassion for thee,
And mourn even the inevitable death
Provoked by thy wild wrath, and regal fierceness.
Now we remit thee to thy preparation:
Let it be brief, and we ourselves will be
Thy guides unto the place where first we were

United to thee as thy subjects, and
'Thy senate ; and must now be parted from thee
As such for ever, on the self-same spot. —
Guards ! form the Doge's escort to his chamber.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The Doge's Apartment.

The DOGE as Prisoner, and the DUCHESS attending him.

Doge. Now, that the priest is gone, 'twere useless
all

To linger out the miserable minutes ;
But one pang more, the pang of parting from thee,
And I will leave the few last grains of sand,
Which yet remain of the accorded hour,
Still falling — I have done with Time.

Ang.

Alas !

And I have been the cause, the unconscious cause ;
And for this funeral marriage, this black union,
Which thou, compliant with my father's wish,
Didst promise at *his* death, thou hast seal'd thine own.

Doge. Not so : there was that in my spirit ever
Which shaped out for itself some great reverse ;
The marvel is, it came not until now —
And yet it was foretold me.

Ang.

How foretold you ?

Doge. Long years ago — so long, they are a doubt
In memory, and yet they live in annals :
When I was in my youth, and served the senate
And signory as podesta and captain
Of the town of Treviso, on a day
Of festival, the sluggish bishop who
Convey'd the Host aroused my rash young anger,

By strange delay, and arrogant reply
To my reproof: I raised my hand and smote him,
Until he reel'd beneath his holy burthen;
And as he rose from earth again, he raised
His tremulous hands in pious wrath towards Heaven.
Thence pointing to the Host, which had fallen from
him,

He turn'd to me, and said, "The hour will come
When he thou hast o'erthrown shall overthrow thee:
The glory shall depart from out thy house,
The wisdom shall be shaken from thy soul,
And in thy best maturity of mind
A madness of the heart shall seize upon thee;¹
Passion shall tear thee when all passions cease
In other men, or mellow into virtues;
And majesty, which decks all other heads,
Shall crown to leave thee headless; honours shall
But prove to thee the heralds of destruction,
And hoary hairs of shame, and both of death,
But not such death as fits an aged man."
Thus saying, he pass'd on. — That hour is come.

Ang. And with this warning couldst thou not have
striven

To avert the fatal moment, and atone,
By penitence, for that which thou hadst done?

Doge. I own the words went to my heart, so much
That I remember'd them amid the maze
Of life, as if they form'd a spectral voice,
Which shook me in a supernatural dream;
And I repented; but 't was not for me
To pull in resolution: what must be
I could not change, and would not fear. — Nay more,
Thou canst not have forgot, what all remember,
That on my day of landing here as Doge,

¹ ["A madness of the heart shall rise within."—MS.]

On my return from Rome, a mist of such
Unwonted density went on before
The Bucentaur, like the columnar cloud
Which usher'd Israel out of Egypt, till
The pilot was misled, and disembark'd us
Between the pillars of Saint Mark's, where 't is
The custom of the state to put to death
Its criminals, instead of touching at
The Riva della Paglia, as the wont is, —
So that all Venice shudder'd at the omen.

Ang. Ah ! little boots it now to recollect
Such things.

Doge. And yet I find a comfort in
The thought, that these things are the work of Fate ;
For I would rather yield to gods than men,
Or cling to any creed of destiny,
Rather than deem these mortals, most of whom
I know to be as worthless as the dust,
And weak as worthless, more than instruments
Of an o'er-ruling power ; they in themselves
Were all incapable — they could not be
Victors of him who oft had conquer'd for them

Ang. Employ the minutes left in aspirations
Of a more healing nature, and in peace
Even with these wretches take thy flight to heaven.

Doge. I am at peace : the peace of certainty,
That a sure hour will come, when their sons' sons,
And this proud city, and these azure waters,
And all which makes them eminent and bright,
Shall be a desolation and a curse,
A hissing and a scoff unto the nations,
A Carthage, and a Tyre, an Ocean Babel

Ang. Speak not thus now : the surge of passion still
Sweeps o'er thee to the last ; thou dost deceive
Thyself, and canst not injure them — be calmer.

Doge. I stand within eternity, and see

Into eternity, and I behold —
Ay, palpable as I see thy sweet face
For the last time — the days which I denounce
Unto all time against these wave-girt walls,
And they who are indwellers.

Guard (coming forward). Doge of Venice,
The Ten are in attendance on your highness.

Doge. Then farewell, Angiolina! — one embrace —
Forgive the old man who hath been to thee
A fond but fatal husband — love my memory —
I would not ask so much for me still living,
But thou canst judge of me more kindly now,
Seeing my evil feelings are at rest.
Besides, of all the fruit of these long years,
Glory, and wealth, and power, and fame, and name,
Which generally leave some flowers to bloom
Even o'er the grave, I have nothing left, not even
A little love, or friendship, or esteem,
No, not enough to extract an epitaph
From ostentatious kinsmen; in one hour
I have uprooted all my former life,
And outlived every thing, except thy heart,
The pure, the good, the gentle, which will oft
With unimpair'd but not a clamorous grief¹
Still keep — Thou turn'st so pale! — Alas! she
faints,
She has no breath, no pulse! — Guards! lend your
aid —
I cannot leave her thus, and yet 't is better,
Since every lifeless moment spares a pang.
When she shakes off this temporary death,
I shall be with the Eternal. — Call her women —
One look! — how cold her hand! — as cold as mine

¹ [“ With unimpair'd but not outrageous grief.” — MS.]

Shall be ere she recovers. — Gently tend her,
And take my last thanks — I am ready now.

[*The Attendants of ANGIOLINA enter, and surround their Mistress, who has fainted. — Exeunt the DOGE, Guards, &c. &c.*

SCENE III.

The Court of the Ducal Palace: the outer gates are shut against the people. — The DOGE enters in his ducal robes, in procession with the Council of Ten and other Patricians, attended by the Guards, till they arrive at the top of the "Giants' Staircase" (where the Doges took the oaths); the Executioner is stationed there with his sword. — On arriving, a Chief of the Ten takes off the ducal cap from the Doge's head.

Doge. So, now the Doge is nothing, and at last
I am again Marino Faliero :
'T is well to be so, though but for a moment.
Here was I crown'd, and here, bear witness, Heaven !
With how much more contentment I resign
That shining mockery, the ducal bauble,
Than I received the fatal ornament.

One of the Ten. Thou tremblest, Faliero !

Doge. 'T is with age, then. ¹

Ben. Faliero ! hast thou aught further to commend,
Compatible with justice, to the senate ?

¹ This was the actual reply of Bailli, maire of Paris, to a Frenchman who made him the same reproach on his way to execution,

yet...
by Renault, and other coincidences arising from the subject. I need hardly remind the gentlest reader, that such coincidences must be accidental, from the very facility of their detection by reference to so popular a play on the stage and in the closet as Otway's chef-d'œuvre.

Doge. I would commend my nephew to their mercy,
My consort to their justice ; for methinks
My death, and such a death, might settle all
Between the state and me.

Ben. They shall be cared for ;
Even notwithstanding thine unheard-of crime.

Doge. Unheard of ! ay, there 's not a history
But shows a thousand crown'd conspirators
Against the people ; but to set them free,
One sovereign only died, and one is dying.

Ben. And who were they who fell in such a cause ?

Doge. The King of Sparta, and the Doge of
Venice —

Agis and Faliero !

Ben. Hast thou more
To utter or to do ?

Doge. May I speak ?

Ben. Thou may'st ;
But recollect the people are without,
Beyond the compass of the human voice.

Doge. I speak to Time and to Eternity,¹
Of which I grow a portion, not to man.
Ye elements ! in which to be resolved
I hasten, let my voice be as a spirit
Upon you ! Ye blue waves ! which bore my banner,
Ye winds ! which flutter'd o'er as if you loved it,
And fill'd my swelling sails as they were wafted
To many a triumph ! Thou, my native earth,
Which I have bled for ! and thou foreign earth,
Which drank this willing blood from many a wound !
Ye stones, in which my gore will not sink, but
Reek up to heaven ! Ye skies, which will receive it !

¹ [Sentence being passed upon the Doge, he is brought with much pomp to the place of execution. His last speech is a grand prophetic rant ; something strained and elaborate — but eloquent and terrible. — JEFFREY.]

Thou sun ! which shinest on these things, and Thou !
 Who kindlest and who quenchest suns ! ¹ — Attest !
 I am not innocent — but are these guiltless ?
 I perish, but not unavenged ; far ages
 Float up from the abyss of time to be,
 And show these eyes, before they close, the doom
 Of this proud city, and I leave my curse
 On her and hers for ever ! — Yes, the hours
 Are silently engendering of the day,
 When she, who built 'gainst Attila a bulwark,
 Shall yield, and bloodlessly and basely yield,
 Unto a bastard Attila, without
 Shedding so much blood in her last defence,
 As these old veins, oft drain'd in shielding her,
 Shall pour in sacrifice. — She shall be bought
 And sold, and be an appanage to those
 Who shall despise her ! ² — She shall stoop to be

¹ [“ Who makest and destroyest suns ! ” — MS]

² Should the dramatic picture seem harsh, let the reader look to the historical, of the period prophesied, or rather of the few years preceding that period. Voltaire calculated their “ nostre bene merite Meretrici ” at 12,000 of regulars, without including volunteers and local militia, on what authority I know not ; but it is, perhaps, the only part of the population not decreased. Venice once contained two hundred thousand inhabitants : there are now about ninety thousand ; and THESE !! few individuals can conceive, and none could describe, the actual state into which the more than infernal tyranny of Austria has plunged this unhappy city. From the present decay and degeneracy of Venice under the Barbarians, there are some honourable individual exceptions. There is Pasqualigo, the last, and, alas ! *posthumous* son of the marriage of the Doges with the Adriatic, who fought his frigate with far greater gallantry than any of his French coadjutors in the memorable action off Lissa. I came home in the squadron with the prizes in 1811, and recollect to have heard Sir William Hoste, and the other officers engaged in that glorious conflict, speak in the highest terms of Pasqualigo's behaviour. There is the Abbate Morelli. There is Alvise Querini, who, after a long and honourable diplomatic career, finds some consolation for the wrongs of his country, in the pursuits of literature with his nephew, Vittor Benzon, the son of the celebrated beauty, the heroine of

A province for an empire, petty town
In lieu of capital, with slaves for senates,
Beggars for nobles, ¹ panders for a people ! ²
Then when the Hebrew's in thy palaces, ³
The Hun in thy high places, and the Greek
Walks o'er thy mart, and smiles on it for his :

“La Biondina in Gondoletta.” There are the patrician poet Morosini, and the poet Lamberti, the author of the “Biondina,” &c and many other estimable productions; and, not least in an Englishman’s estimation, Madame Michelli, the translator of Shakspeare. There are the young Dandolo and the improvisatore Carrer, and Giuseppe Albrizzi, the accomplished son of an accomplished mother. There is Aglietti, and, were there nothing else, there is the immortality of Canova. Cicognara, Mustoxithi, Bucati, &c. &c. I do not reckon, because the one is a Greek, and the others were born at least a hundred miles off, which, throughout Italy, constitutes, if not a *foreigner*, at least a *stranger* (*forestiere*).

¹ ["Beggars for nobles, {lazars
lepers } for a people!"—MS.]
wretches }

² [The following sketch of the indigent Venetian noble is by Gritti:—

**“ Sono un povero ladro aristocratico
Errante per la Veneta palude,
Che i denti per il mio duro panatico
Aguzzo in su la cote e in su l'incide;
Mi slombo in piedi, e a seder' mi snatico,
Ballotando or la fame, or la virtude:
Prego, piango, minaccio, insisto, adulo,
Ed ho me stesso, e la mia patria in culo.”**

"I'm a poor peer of Venice loose among her Marshes! With standing bows I've double grown, And in my trade of place and pension-monger, Sate till I've ground my buttocks to the bone; Balloting now for *merit*, now for *hunger*; Breaking, myself, my teeth, upon a stone, I crave, cringe, storm, and strive, through life's short farce, And vote friends, self, and country all——." — ROSE.]

³ The chief palaces on the Brenta now belong to the Jews; who in the earlier times of the republic were only allowed to inhabit Mestri, and not to enter the city of Venice. The whole commerce is in the hands of the Jews and Greeks, and the Huns form the garrison.

When thy patricians beg their bitter bread
 In narrow streets, and in their shameful need
 Make their nobility a plea for pity;
 Then, when the few who still retain a wreck
 Of their great fathers' heritage shall fawn
 Round a barbarian Vice of Kings' Vice-gerent,
 Even in the palace where they sway'd as sovereigns,
 Even in the palace where they slew their sovereign,
 Proud of some name they have disgraced, or sprung
 From an adulteress boastful of her guilt
 With some large gondolier or foreign soldier,
 Shall bear about their bastardy in triumph
 To the third spurious generation; ¹ — when

¹ ["It must be owned," says Bishop Heber, "that the Duke bears his calamities with a patience which would be more heroic if it were less wordy. It is possible that a condemned man might recollect his quarrel with the Bishop of Treviso, and the evil omen which accompanied his solemn landing at Venice. But there are not many condemned men who, during a last and stunted interview with a beloved wife, would have employed so much time in relating anecdotes of themselves; and we should least of all expect it in one whose fiery character would have induced him to hurry forward to his end. The same objection applies to his prophecy of the future miseries of Venice. Its language and imagery are, doubtless, extremely powerful and impressive; but we cannot allow that it is either dramatic or characteristic. A prophecy (which we knew to be *ex post facto*) is, under any circumstances, one of the cheapest and least artificial of poetical machines. But, under such circumstances as the present, no audience could have endured so long a speech without disgust and weariness; and Marino Faliero was most likely to have met his death like our own Sydney —

' With no harangue idly proclaim'd aloud
 To catch the worthless plaudit of the crowd;
 No feeble boast, death's terrors to defy,
 Yet still delaying, as afraid to die !'

His last speech to the executioner would, probably, have been his only one : —

———— ' Slave, do thine office !
 Strike as I struck the foe ! Strike as I would
 Have struck those tyrants ! Strike deep as my curse !
 Strike — and but once !' — *Qu. Rev.* vol. xxvii. p. 90.]

Thy sons are in the lowest scale of being,
 Slaves turn'd o'er to the vanquish'd by the victors,
 Despised by cowards for greater cowardice,
 And scorn'd even by the vicious for such vices
 As in the monstrous grasp of their conception
 Defy all codes to image or to name them ;
 Then, when of Cyprus, now thy subject kingdom,
 All thine inheritance shall be her shame
 Entail'd on thy less virtuous daughters, grown
 A wider proverb for worse prostitution ; —
 When all the ills of conquer'd states shall cling thee,
 Vice without splendour, sin without relief
 Even from the gloss of love to smooth it o'er,
 But in its stead, coarse lusts of habitude,¹
 Prurient yet passionless, cold studied lewdness,
 Depraving nature's frailty to an art ; —
 When these and more are heavy on thee, when
 Smiles without mirth, and pastimes without pleasure,
 Youth without honour, age without respect,
 Meanness and weakness, and a sense of woe
 'Gainst which thou wilt not strive, and dar'st not
 murmur,²

We are surprised that Bishop Heber did not quote Andrew Marvell's magnificent lines on Charles I. : —

“ While round the armed bands
 Did clap their bloody hands,
 He nothing common did, or mean,
 Upon that memorable scene ;
 But with his keener eye
 The axe's edge did try ;
 Nor call'd the Gods with vulgar spight
 To vindicate his helpless right,
 But bow'd his comely head
 Down, as upon a bed.”]

¹ [See APPENDIX, Note C.]

² If the Doge's prophecy seem remarkable, look to the following, made by Alamanni two hundred and seventy years ago : —
 “ There is one very singular prophecy concerning Venice: ‘ If thou dost not change,’ it says to that proud republic, ‘ thy liberty

Have made thee last and worst of peopled deserts,
 Then, in the last gasp of thine agony,
 Amidst thy many murders, think of *mine* !
 Thou den of drunkards with the blood of princes !¹
 Gehenna of the waters ! thou sea Sodom !²
 Thus I devote thee to the infernal gods !
 Thee and thy serpent seed !³

[*Here the DOGE turns and addresses the Executioner.*

which is already on the wing, will not reckon a century more than the thousandth year.' If we carry back the epocha of Venetian freedom to the establishment of the government under which the republic flourished, we shall find that the date of the election of the first Doge is 697; and if we add one century to a thousand, that is, eleven hundred years, we shall find the sense of the prediction to be literally this: 'Thy liberty will not last till 1797.' Recollect that Venice ceased to be free in the year 1796, the fifth year of the French republic; and you will perceive that there never was prediction more pointed, or more exactly followed by the event. You will, therefore, note as very remarkable the three lines of Alamanni addressed to Venice; which, however, no one has pointed out:—

'Se non cangi pensier, un secol solo
 Non conterà sopra 'l millesimo anno
 Tua libertà, che va fuggendo a volo.'

Many prophecies have passed for such, and many men have been called prophets for much less.—GINGUENE', *Hist. Lit. de l'Italie*, t. ix. p. 144.

¹ Of the first fifty Doges, *five* abdicated—*five* were banished with their eyes put out—*five* were MASSACRED—and *nine* deposed; so that *nineteen* out of fifty lost the throne by violence, besides two who fell in battle: this occurred long previous to the reign of Marino Faliero. One of his more immediate predecessors, Andrea Dandolo, died of vexation. Marino Faliero himself perished as related. Amongst his successors, *Foscari*, after seeing his son repeatedly tortured and banished, was deposed, and died of breaking a blood-vessel, on hearing the bell of Saint Mark's toll for the election of his successor. Morosini was impeached for the loss of Candia; but this was previous to his dukedom, during which he conquered the Morea, and was styled the Peloponnesian. Faliero might truly say,

"Thou den of drunkards with the blood of princes!"

² ["Thou brothel of the waters! thou sea Sodom!"—MS.]

³ [Lord Byron breaks out with all his power in the curse with which he makes this old man take leave of the scene of his

Slave, do thine office !
 Strike as I struck the foe ! Strike as I would
 Have struck those tyrants ! Strike deep as my curse !
 Strike — and but once !

[*The DOGE throws himself upon his knees, and as the
 Executioner raises his sword the scene closes.*]

SCENE IV.

*The Piazza and Piazzetta of St. Mark's. — The People
 in crowds gathered round the grated gates of the Ducal
 Palace, which are shut.*

First Citizen. I have gain'd the gate, and can discern the Ten,
 Robed in their gowns of state, ranged round the Doge.
Second Cit. I cannot reach thee with mine utmost effort.

How is it ? let us hear at least, since sight
 Is thus prohibited unto the people,
 Except the occupiers of those bars.

First Cit. One has approach'd the Doge, and now
 they strip
 The ducal bonnet from his head — and now
 He raises his keen eyes to heaven ; I see
 Them glitter, and his lips move — Hush ! hush ! — no,
 'T was but a murmur — Curse upon the distance !
 His words are inarticulate, but the voice
 Swells up like mutter'd thunder ; would we could
 But gather a sole sentence !

triumphs and his sorrows. The present abject condition of her that “once did hold the gorgeous East in fee” — the barbarian sway under which she is bowed down to the dust — the profligacy of manners, which ought rather, perhaps, to have been represented as the cause than the consequence of the loss of Venetian liberty ; — all these topics are handled — and handled as no writer but Byron could have dared to handle them. — LOCKHART.]

Second Cit. Hush ! we perhaps may catch the sound.

First Cit. 'Tis vain,

I cannot hear him. — How his hoary hair
Streams on the wind like foam upon the wave !
Now — now — he kneels — and now they form a circle
Round him, and all is hidden — but I see
The lifted sword in air — Ah ! hark ! it falls !

[*The People murmur.*]

Third Cit. Then they have murder'd him who would
have freed us.

Fourth Cit. He was a kind man to the commons
ever.

Fifth Cit. Wisely they did to keep their portals
barr'd.

Would we had known the work they were preparing
Ere we were summon'd here — we would have brought
Weapons, and forced them !

Sixth Cit. Are you sure he's dead ?

First Cit. I saw the sword fall — Lo ! what have we
here ?

*Enter on the Balcony of the Palace which fronts Saint
Mark's Place a CHIEF OF THE TEN,¹ with a bloody
sword. He waves it thrice before the People, and ex-
claims,*

“ Justice hath dealt upon the mighty Traitor ! ”

[*The gates are opened ; the populace rush in towards the
“ Giants' Staircase,” where the execution has taken
place. The foremost of them exclaims to those behind,
The gory head² rolls down the Giants' Steps !*

[*The curtain falls.*³

¹ “ Un Capo de' Dieci ” are the words of Sanuto's Chronicle.

² { [“ The gory head is rolling down the steps !
“ The head is rolling down the gory steps ! ” — MS.] }

³ [As a play, Marino Faliero is deficient in the attractive pas-
sions, in probability, and in depth and variety of interest ; and re-
volts throughout, by the extravagant disproportion which the injury
bears to the unmeasured resentment with which it is pursued.

As a poem, though it occasionally displays great force and elevation, it obviously wants both grace and facility. The diction is often heavy and cumbrous, and the versification without sweetness or elasticity. It is generally very verbose, and sometimes exceedingly dull. Altogether, it gives us the impression of a thing worked out against the grain, and not poured forth from the fulness of the heart or the fancy; — the ambitious and elaborate work of a powerful mind engaged with an unsuitable task — not the spontaneous effusion of an exuberant imagination, sporting in the fulness of its strength. Every thing is heightened and enforced with visible effort and design; and the noble author is often contented to be emphatic by dint of exaggeration, and eloquent by the common topics of declamation. Lord Byron is, undoubtedly, a poet of the very first order, and has talents to reach the very highest honours of the drama. But he must not again disdain love, and ambition, and jealousy; he must not substitute what is merely *bizarre* and extraordinary, for what is naturally and universally interesting, nor expect, by any exaggerations, so to rouse and rule our sympathies by the senseless anger of an old man, and the prudish proprieties of an untempted woman, as by the agency of the great and simple passions with which, in some of their degrees, all men are familiar, and by which alone the Dramatic Muse has hitherto wrought her miracles. — JEFFREY.]

On the whole, the Doge of Venice is the effect of a powerful and cultivated mind. It has all the requisites of tragedy, sublimity, terror, and pathos — all but that without which the rest are unavailing, interest! With many detached passages which neither derogate from Lord Byron's former fame, nor would have derogated from the reputation of our best ancient tragedians, it is, as a whole, neither sustained nor impressive. The poet, except in the soliloquy of Lioni, scarcely ever seems to have written with his own thorough good liking. He may be suspected throughout to have had in his eye some other model than nature; and we rise from his work with the same feeling as if we had been reading a translation. For this want of interest the subject itself is, doubtless, in some measure to blame; though, if the same subject had been differently treated, we are inclined to believe a very different effect would have been produced. But for the constraint and stiffness of the poetry, we have nothing to blame but the apparent resolution of its author to set (at whatever risk) an example of classical correctness to his uncivilised countrymen, and rather to forego success than to succeed after the manner of Shakspeare. — HEDER.]

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

[I AM obliged for the following excellent translation of the old Chronicle to Mr. F. Cohen¹, to whom the reader will find himself indebted for a version that I could not myself—though after many years' intercourse with Italian—have given by any means so purely and so faithfully.²

STORY OF MARINO FALIERO, DOGE XLIX.
MCCCLIV.

On the eleventh day of September, in the year of our Lord 1354, Marino Faliero was elected and chosen to be the Duke of the Commonwealth of Venice. He was Count of Valdemarino, in the Marches of Treviso, and a Knight, and a wealthy man to boot. As soon as the election was completed, it was resolved in the Great Council, that a deputation of twelve should be despatched to Marino Faliero the Duke, who was then on his way from Rome; for when he was chosen, he was ambassador at the court of the Holy Father, at Rome,—the Holy Father himself held his court at Avignon. When Messer Marino Faliero the Duke was about to land in this city, on the 5th day of October, 1354, a thick haze came on, and darkened the air: and he was enforced to land on the place of Saint Mark, between the two columns, on the spot where evil doers are put to death; and all thought that this was the worst of tokens.—Nor must I forget to write that which I have read in a chronicle. When Messer Marino Faliero was Podesta and Captain of Treviso, the Bishop delayed

1 [Mr. Francis Cohen, now Sir Francis Palgrave, K. H., the learned author of the "Rise and Progress of the English Constitution," "History of the Anglo-Saxons," &c. &c.]

2 [In a letter to Mr. Murray, dated Ravenna, July 30. 1821, Lord B. says:—"Enclosed is the best account of the Doge Faliero, which was only sent to me, from an old MS., the other day. Get it translated, and append it as a note to the next edition. You will, perhaps, be pleased to see, that my conceptions of his character were correct; though I regret not having met with the extract before. You will perceive that he himself said exactly what he is made to say about the Bishop of Treviso. You will see also that he spoke little, and those only words of rage and disdain, ~~after~~ his arrest; which is the case in the play, except when he breaks out at the close of Act fifth. But his speech to the conspirators is better in the MS. than in the play. I wish I had met with it in time."]

coming in with the holy sacrament, on a day when a procession was to take place. Now, the said Marino Faliero was so very proud and wrathful, that he buffeted the Bishop, and almost struck him to the ground: and, therefore, Heaven allowed Marino Faliero to go out of his right senses, in order that he might bring himself to an evil death.

When this Duke had held the dukedom during nine months and six days, he, being wicked and ambitious, sought to make himself Lord of Venice, in the manner which I have read in an ancient chronicle. When the Thursday arrived upon which they were wont to hunt the bull, the bull hunt took place as usual; and, according to the usage of those times, after the bull hunt had ended, they all proceeded unto the palace of the Duke, and assembled together in one of his halls; and they disported themselves with the women. And until the first bell tolled they danced, and then a banquet was served up. My Lord the Duke paid the expenses thereof, provided he had a Duchess, and after the banquet they all returned to their homes.

Now to this feast there came a certain Ser Michele Steno, a gentleman of poor estate and very young, but crafty and daring, and who loved one of the damsels of the Duchess. Ser Michele stood amongst the women upon the solajo; and he behaved indiscreetly, so that my Lord the Duke ordered that he should be kicked off the solajo; and the esquires of the Duke flung him down from the solajo accordingly. Ser Michele thought that such an affront was beyond all bearing; and when the feast was over, and all other persons had left the palace, he, continuing heated with anger, went to the hall of audience, and wrote certain unseemly words relating to the Duke and the Duchess upon the chair in which the Duke was used to sit; for in those days the Duke did not cover his chair with cloth of sendal, but he sat in a chair of wood. Ser Michele wrote thereon — “*Marin Falier, the husband of the fair wife; others kiss her, but he keeps her.*” In the morning the words were seen, and the matter was considered to be very scandalous; and the Senate commanded the Avogadori of the Commonwealth to proceed therein with the greatest diligence. A largess of great amount was immediately proffered by the Avogadori, in order to discover who had written these words. And at length it was known that Michele Steno had written them. It was resolved in the Council of Forty that he should be arrested; and he then confessed that in the fit of vexation and spite, occasioned by his being thrust off the solajo in the presence of his mistress, he had written the words. Therefore the Council debated thereon. And the Council took his youth into consideration, and that he was a lover; and therefore they adjudged that he should be kept in close confinement during two months, and that afterwards he should be banished from Venice and the state during one year. In consequence of this merciful sentence the Duke became exceedingly wroth, it appearing to him, that the Council had not acted in such a manner as

was required by the respect due to his ducal dignity ; and he said that they ought to have condemned Ser Michele to be hanged by the neck, or at least to be banished for life.

Now it was fated that my Lord Duke Marino was to have his head cut off. And as it is necessary when any effect is to be brought about, that the cause of such effect must happen, it therefore came to pass, that on the very day after sentence had been pronounced on Ser Michele Steno, being the first day of Lent, a gentleman of the house of Barbaro, a choleric gentleman, went to the arsenal, and required certain things of the masters of the galleys. This he did in the presence of the Admiral of the arsenal, and he, heaving the request, answered, — No, it cannot be done. High words arose between the gentleman and the Admiral, and the gentleman struck him with his fist just above the eye, and as he happened to have a ring on his finger, the ring cut the Admiral and drew blood. The Admiral, all bruised and bloody, ran straight to the Duke to complain, and with the intent of praying him to inflict some heavy punishment upon the gentleman of Cà Barbaro. — “ What wouldst thou have me do for thee ? ” answered the Duke. — “ think upon the shameful gibe which hath been written concerning me ; and think on the manner in which they have punished that ribald Michele Steno, who wrote it ; and see how the Council of Forty respect our person. ” — Upon this the Admiral answered, — “ My Lord Duke, if you would wish to make yourself a prince, and to cut all those cuckoldy gentlemen to pieces, I have the heart, if you do but help me, to make you prince of all this state ; and then you may punish them all. ” — Hearing this, the Duke said, — “ How can such a matter be brought about ? ” — and so they discoursed thereon.

The Duke called for his nephew, Ser Bertuccio Faliero, who lived with him in the palace, and they communed about this plot. And without leaving the place, they sent for Philip Calendaro, a seaman of great repute, and for Bertuccio Israello, who was exceedingly wily and cunning. Then taking counsel amongst themselves, they agreed to call in some others ; and so, for several nights successively, they met with the Duke at home in his palace. And the following men were called in singly ; to wit ; — Niccòlo Fagiuolo, Giovanni da Corfu, Stefano Fagiono, Niccòlo dalle Bende, Niccòlo Biondo, and Stefano Trivisano. — It was concerted that sixteen or seventeen leaders should be stationed in various parts of the city, each being at the head of forty men, armed and prepared ; but the followers were not to know their destination. On the appointed day they were to make affrays amongst themselves here and there, in order that the Duke might have a pretence for tolling the bells of San Marco ; these bells are never rung but by the order of the Duke. And at the sound of the bells, these sixteen or seventeen, with their followers, were to come to San Marco, through the streets which open upon the Piazza. And when the noble and leading citizens should come into the Piazza, to know the cause of the riot, then the conspi-

rators were to cut them in pieces ; and this work being finished, my Lord Marino Faliero the Duke was to be proclaimed the Lord of Venice. Things having been thus settled, they agreed to fulfil their intent on Wednesday, the 15th day of April, in the year 1355. So covertly did they plot, that no one ever dreamt of their machinations.

But the Lord, who hath always helped this most glorious city, and who, loving its righteousness and holiness, hath never forsaken it, inspired one Beltramo Bergamasco to be the cause of bringing the plot to light, in the following manner. This Beltramo, who belonged to Ser Niccolò Lioni of Santo Stefano, had heard a word or two of what was to take place ; and so, in the before-mentioned month of April, he went to the house of the aforesaid Ser Niccolò Lioni, and told him all the particulars of the plot. Ser Niccolò, when he heard all these things, was struck dead, as it were, with affright. He heard all the particulars ; and Beltramo prayed him to keep it all secret ; and if he told Ser Niccolò, it was in order that Ser Niccolò might stop at home on the 15th of April, and thus save his life. Beltramo was going, but Ser Niccolò ordered his servants to lay hands upon him, and lock him up. Ser Niccolò then went to the house of Messer Giovanni Gradenigo Nasom, who afterwards became Duke, and who also lived at Santo Stefano, and told him all. The matter seemed to him to be of the very greatest importance, as indeed it was ; and they two went to the house of Sei Marco Cornaro, who lived at San Felice ; and, having spoken with him, they all three then determined to go back to the house of Ser Niccolò Lioni, to examine the said Beltramo ; and having questioned him, and heard all that he had to say, they left him in confinement. And then they all three went into the sacristy of San Salvatore, and sent their men to summon the Councillors, the Avogadori, the Capi de' Dieci, and those of the Great Council.

When all were assembled, the whole story was told to them. They were struck dead, as it were, with affright. They determined to send for Beltramo. He was brought in before them. They examined him, and ascertained that the matter was true ; and, although they were exceedingly troubled, yet they determined upon their measures. And they sent for the Capi de' Quarante, the Signori di Notte, the Capi de' Sestieri, and the Cinque della Pace ; and they were ordered to associate to their men other good men and true, who were to proceed to the houses of the ringleaders of the conspiracy, and secure them. And they secured the foreman of the arsenal, in order that the conspirators might not do mischief. Towards nightfall they assembled in the palace. When they were assembled in the palace, they caused the gates of the quadrangle of the palace to be shut. And they sent to the keeper of the Bell-tower, and forbade the tolling of the bells. All this was carried into effect. The before-mentioned conspirators were secured, and they were brought to the palace,

and, as the Council of Ten saw that the Duke was in the plot, they resolved that twenty of the leading men of the state should be associated to them, for the purpose of consultation and deliberation, but that they should not be allowed to ballot.

The counsellors were the following :— Ser Giovanni Mocenigo, of the Sestiero of San Marco ; Ser Almoro Veniero da Santa Marina, of the Sestiero of Castello ; Ser Tomaso Viadro, of the Sestiero of Canaregio ; Ser Giovanni Sanudo, of the Sestiero of Santa Croce ; Ser Pietro Trivisano, of the Sestiero of San Paolo ; Ser Pantalone Barbo il Grando, of the Sestiero of Ossoduro. The Avogadori of the Commonwealth were Zufredo Morosini, and Ser Orio Pasqualigo ; and these did not ballot. Those of the Council of Ten were Ser Giovanni Marcello, Ser Tomaso Sanudo, and Ser Micheletto Dolhno, the heads of the aforesaid Council of Ten. Ser Luca da Legge, and Ser Pietro da Mosto, inquisitors of the aforesaid Council. And Ser Marco Polani, Ser Marino Veniero, Ser Lando Lombardo, and Ser Nicoletto Trivisano, of Sant' Angelo.

Late in the night, just before the dawning, they chose a junta of twenty noblemen of Venice from amongst the wisest, and the worthiest, and the oldest. They were to give counsel, but not to ballot. And they would not admit any one of Cà Faliero. And Niccolo Faliero, and another Niccolo Faliero, of San Tomaso, were expelled from the Council, because they belonged to the family of the Doge. And this resolution of creating the junta of twenty was much praised throughout the state. The following were the members of the junta of twenty :— Ser Marco Giustiniani, Procuratore, Ser Andrea Erizzo, Procuratore, Ser Lionardo Giustiniani, Procuratore, Ser Andrea Contarini, Ser Simone Dandolo, Ser Niccolo Volpe, Ser Giovanni Loredano, Ser Marco Diedo, Ser Giovanni Gradenigo, Ser Andrea Cornaro, Cavaliere, Ser Marco Soranzo, Ser Rinieri du Mosto, Ser Gazano Marcello, Ser Marino Morosini, Ser Stefano Belegno, Ser Niccolo Lioni, Ser Filippo Orio, Ser Marco Trivisano, Ser Jacopo Bragadino, Ser Giovanni Foscarini.

These twenty were accordingly called in to the Council of Ten ; and they sent for my Lord Marino Faliero the Duke : and my Lord Marino was then consorting in the palace with people of great estate, gentlemen, and other good men, none of whom knew yet how the fact stood.

At the same time Bertucci Israello, who, as one of the ring-leaders, was to head the conspirators in Santa Croce, was arrested and bound, and brought before the Council. Zanello del Brin, Nicoletto di Rosa, Nicoletto Alberto, and the Guardiola, were also taken, together with several seamen, and people of various ranks. These were examined, and the truth of the plot was ascertained.

On the 16th of April judgment was given in the Council of Ten, that Filippo Calendaro and Bertuccio Israello should be hanged upon the red pillars of the balcony of the palace, from which the

Duke is wont to look at the bull hunt : and they were hanged with gags in their mouths.

The next day the following were condemned :— Niccolo Zucuolo, Niccoletto Biondo, Nicoletto Doro, Marco Giuda, Jacomello Dagolino, Nicoletto Fidele, the son of Filippo Calendaro, Marco Torello, called Israello, Stefano Trivisano, the money changer of Santa Margherita, and Antonio dalle Bende. These were all taken at Chiozza, for they were endeavouring to escape. Afterwards, by virtue of the sentence which was passed upon them in the Council of Ten, they were hanged on successive days ; some singly and some in couples, upon the columns of the palace, beginning from the red columns, and so going onwards towards the canal. And other prisoners were discharged, because, although they had been involved in the conspiracy, yet they had not assisted in it : for they were given to understand by some of the heads of the plot, that they were to come armed and prepared for the service of the state, and in order to secure certain criminals ; and they knew nothing else. Nicoletto Alberto, the Guardaga, and Bartolommeo Ciricolo and his son, and several others, who were not guilty, were discharged.

On Friday, the 16th day of April, judgment was also given in the aforesaid Council of Ten, that my Lord Marino Faliero, the Duke, should have his head cut off ; and that the execution should be done on the landing-place of the stone staircase, where the Dukes take their oath when they first enter the palace. On the following day, the 17th of April, the doors of the palace being shut, the Duke had his head cut off, about the hour of noon. And the cap of estate was taken from the Duke's head before he came down stairs. When the execution was over, it is said that one of the Council of Ten went to the columns of the palace over against the place of St. Mark, and that he showed the bloody sword unto the people, crying out with a loud voice — " The terrible doom hath fallen upon the traitor ! " — and the doors were opened, and the people all rushed in, to see the corpse of the Duke, who had been beheaded.

It must be known that Ser Giovanni Sanudo, the councillor, was not present when the aforesaid sentence was pronounced ; because he was unwell and remained at home. So that only fourteen balloted ; that is to say, five councillors, and nine of the Council of Ten. And it was adjudged, that all the lands and chattels of the Duke, as well as of the other traitors, should be forfeited to the state. And as a grace to the Duke, it was resolved in the Council of Ten, that he should be allowed to dispose of two thousand ducats out of his own property. And it was resolved, that all the councillors and all the Avogadori of the Commonwealth, those of the Council of Ten, and the members of the junta, who had assisted in passing sentence on the Duke and the other traitors, should have the privilege of carrying arms both by day and by night in Venice, and from Grado to Cavazere. And they were also to be allowed two footmen carrying arms, the

aforesaid footmen living and boarding with them in their own houses. And he who did not keep two footmen might transfer the privilege to his sons or his brothers; but only to two. Permission of carrying arms was also granted to the four Notaries of the Chancery, that is to say, of the Supreme Court, who took the depositions; and they were, Amedio, Nicoletto di Lorino, Stefanello, and Pietro de Compostelli, the secretaries of the Signori di Notte.

After the traitors had been hanged, and the Duke had had his head cut off, the state remained in great tranquillity and peace. And, as I have read in a Chronicle, the corpse of the Duke was removed in a barge, with eight torches, to his tomb in the church of San Giovanni e Paolo, where it was buried. The tomb is now in that aisle in the middle of the little church of Santa Maria della Pace, which was built by Bishop Gabriel of Bergamo. It is a coffin of stone, with these words engraven thereon: "*Hic jacet Dominus Marinus Faliero Dux.*" — And they did not paint his portrait in the hall of the Great Council: — but in the place where it ought to have been, you see these words: — "*Hic est locus Marini Faliero, decapitati pro criminibus.*" — And it is thought that his house was granted to the church of Sant' Apostolo; it was that great one near the bridge. Yet this could not be the case, or else the family bought it back from the church; for it still belongs to Cà Faliero. I must not refrain from noting, that some wished to write the following words in the place where his portrait ought to have been, as aforesaid: — "*Marinus Faliero Dux, temeritas me cepit. Pallas lui, decapitatus pro criminibus.*" — Others, also, indited a couplet, worthy of being inscribed upon his tomb.

"*Dux Venetum jacet heic, patriam qui prodere tentans,
Sceptra, decus, censum perdidit, atque caput.*"

NOTE B.

PETRARCH ON THE CONSPIRACY OF MARINO FALIERO.¹

"AL giovane Doge Andrea Dandolo succedette un vecchio, il quale tardi si pose al timone della repubblica, ma sempre prima di quel, che facea d' uopo a lui, ed alla patria: egli è Marino Faliero, personaggio a me noto per antica dimestichezza. Falsa era l' opinione intorno a lui, giacchè egli si mostrò fornito più di coraggio, che di senno. Non pago della prima dignità, entrò con

¹ [" Had a copy taken of an extract from Petrarch's Letters, with reference to the conspiracy of the Doge Marino Faliero, containing the poet's opinion of the matter." — *Byron Diary*, Feb. 11. 1821.

sinistro piede nel pubblico Palazzo: imperciocchè questo Doge del Veneti, magistrato sacro in tutti i secoli, che dagli antichi fù sempre venerato qual nume in quella città, l' altr' jeri fù decollato nel vestibolo dell' istesso Palazzo. Discorrerci fin dal principio le cause di un tale evento, e così vario, ed ambiguo non ne fosse il grido. Nessuno però lo scusa, tutti affermano, che egli abbia voluto cangiar qualche cosa nell' ordine della repubblica a lui tramandato dai maggiori. Che desiderava egli di più? Io son d' avviso, che egli abbia ottenuto ciò, che non si concedette a nessun altro: mentre adempiva gli ufficj di legato presso il Pontefice, e sulle rive del Rodano trattava la pace, che io prima di lui avevo indarno tentato di conchiudere, gli fù conferito l' onore del Ducato, che ne chiedeva, ne s' aspettava. Tornato in patria, pensò a quello, cui nessuno non pose mente giammai, e soffrì quello, che a niuno accadde mai di soffrire: giacchè in quel luogo celeberrimo, e chiarissimo, e bellissimo infra tutti quelli, che io vidi, ove i suoi antenati avevano ricevuti grandissimi onori in mezzo alle pompe trionfali, ivi egli fù trascinato in modo servile, e spogliato delle insegne ducali, perdetto la testa, e macchiò col proprio sangue le soglie del tempio, l' atrio del Palazzo, e le scale marmoree reudute spesse volte illustri o dalle solenni festività, o dalle ostili spoglie. Hò notato il luogo, ora noto il tempo: è l' anno del Natale di Cristo 1355, fù il giorno 18 d' Aprile. Si alto è il grido sparso, che se alcuno esaminerà la disciplina, e le costumanze di quella città, e quanto mutamento di cose venga minacciato dalla morte di un sol uomo (quantunque molti altri, come narrano, essendo complici, o subirono l' istesso supplicio, o lo aspettano) si accorgerà, che nulla di più grande avvenne ai nostri tempi nella Italia. Tu forse qui attendi il mio giudizio: assolvo il popolo, se credere alla fama, benchè abbia potuto e castigare più mitemente, e con maggior dolcezza vendicare il suo dolore: ma non così facilmente, si modera un' ira giusta insieme, e grande in un numeroso popolo principalmente, nel quale il precipitoso, ed instabile volgo aguzza gli stimoli dell' irracondia con rapidi, e sconsigliati clamori. Compatisco, e nell' istesso tempo mi adiro con quell' infelice uomo, il quale adorno di un' insolito onore, non so, che cosa si volesse negli estremi anni della sua vita: la calamità di lui diviene sempre più grave, perchè dalla sentenza contra di esso promulgata aperirà, che egli fù non solo misero, ma insano, e demente, e che con vane arti si usurpo per tanti anni una falsa fama di sapienza. Ammonisco i Dogi, i quali gli succederano, che questo è un' esempio posto inanzi ai loro occhj, quale specchio, nel quale veggano d' essere non Signori, ma Duci, anzi nemmeno Duci, ma oncrati servi della Repubblica. Tu sta sano; e giacchè fluttuano le pubbliche cose, sforsiamoci di governar modestissimamente i privati nostri affari." — LEVATI, *Viaggi di Petrarca*, vol. iv. p. 323.

The above Italian translation from the Latin epistles of Petrarch proves — 1stly, That Marino Faliero was a personal friend of Petrarch's; "antica dimestichezza," old intimacy, is the phrase of

the poet. 2dly, That Petrarch thought that he had more courage than conduct, "*più di corraggio che di senno*." 3dly, That there was some jealousy on the part of Petrarch; for he says that Marino Faliero was treating of the peace which he himself had "vainly attempted to conclude." 4thly, That the honour of the Dukedom was conferred upon him, which he neither sought nor expected, "*che nè chiedeva nè aspettava*," and which had never been granted to any other in like circumstances, "*cioè che non si concedette a nessun altro*," a proof of the high esteem in which he must have been held. 5thly, That he had a reputation for wisdom, only forfeited by the last enterprise of his life, "*si usurpò per tanti anni una falsa fama di sapienza*."—"He had usurped for so many years a false fame of wisdom," rather a difficult task, I should think. People are generally found out before eighty years of age, at least in a republic.—From these, and the other historical notes which I have collected, it may be inferred, that Marino Faliero possessed many of the qualities, but not the success of a hero; and that his passions were too violent. The paltry and ignorant account of Dr. Moore falls to the ground. Petrarch says, "that there had been no greater event in his times" (*our times* literally), "*nostri tempi*," in Italy. He also differs from the historian in saying that Faliero was "on the banks of the *Rhone*," instead of at Rome, when elected; the other accounts say, that the deputation of the Venetian senate met him at Ravenna. How this may have been, it is not for me to decide, and is of no great importance. Had the man succeeded, he would have changed the face of Venice, and perhaps of Italy. As it is, what *are* they both?

NOTE C.

VENETIAN SOCIETY AND MANNERS.

"Vice without splendour, sin without relief
Even from the gloss of love to smooth it o'er;
But, in its stead, coarse lusts of habitude," &c.—(*See* p. 219.)

"To these attacks so frequently pointed by the government against the clergy,—to the continual struggles between the different constituted bodies,—to these enterprises carried on by the mass of the nobles against the depositaries of power,—to all those projects of innovation, which always ended by a stroke of state policy; we must add a cause not less fitted to spread contempt for ancient doctrines; *this was the excess of corruption*.

"That freedom of manners, which had been long boasted of as the principal charm of Venetian society, had degenerated into scandalous licentiousness: the tie of marriage was less sacred in

that Catholic country, than among those nations where the laws and religion admit of its being dissolved. Because they could not break the contract, they feigned that it had not existed; and the ground of nullity, immodestly alleged by the married pair, was admitted with equal facility by priests and magistrates, alike corrupt. These divorces, veiled under another name, became so frequent, that the most important act of civil society was discovered to be amenable to a tribunal of exceptions; and to restrain the open scandal of such proceedings became the office of the police. In 1782, the Council of Ten decreed, that every woman who should sue for a dissolution of her marriage should be compelled to await the decision of the judges in some convent, to be named by the court.¹ Soon afterwards the same council summoned all causes of that nature before itself.² This infringement on ecclesiastical jurisdiction having occasioned some remonstrance from Rome, the council retained only the right of rejecting the petition of the married persons, and consented to refer such causes to the holy office as it should not previously have rejected.³

"There was a moment in which, doubtless, the destruction of private fortunes, the ruin of youth, the domestic discord occasioned by these abuses, determined the government to depart from its established maxims concerning the freedom of manners allowed the subject. All the courtesans were banished from Venice; but their absence was not enough to reclaim and bring back good morals to a whole people brought up in the most scandalous licentiousness. Depravity reached the very bosoms of private families, and even into the cloister; and they found themselves obliged to recall, and even to indemnify⁴ women who sometimes gained possession of important secrets, and who might be usefully employed in the ruin of men whose fortunes might have rendered them dangerous. Since that time licentiousness has gone on increasing; and we have seen mothers, not only selling the innocence of their daughters, but selling it by a contract, authenticated by the signature of a public officer, and the performance of which was secured by the protection of the laws.⁵

"The parlours of the convents of noble ladies, and the houses of the courtesans, though the police carefully kept up a number of spies about them, were the only assemblies for society in Venice; and in these two places, so different from each other, there was equal freedom. Music, collations, gallantry, were not more forbidden in the parlours than at the casinos. There were a number

¹ Correspondence of M. Schlick, French chargé d'affaires. Despatch of 24th August, 1782.

² *Ibid.* Despatch, 31st August.

³ *Ibid.* Despatch of 3d September, 1785.

⁴ The decree for their recall designates them as *nostre benemerite meretrici*: a fund and some houses, called *Casa rampante*, were assigned to them; hence the opprobrious appellation of *Carampane*.

⁵ Mayer, Description of Venice, vol. II.; and M. Archenholz, Picture of Italy, vol. I. ch. 2.

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of casinos for the purpose of public assemblies, where gaming was the principal pursuit of the company. It was a strange sight to see persons of either sex masked, or grave in their magisterial robes, round a table, invoking chance, and giving way at one instant to the agonies of despair, at the next to the illusions of hope, and that without uttering a single word.

"The rich had private casinos, but they lived *incognito* in them; and the wretches whom they abandoned found compensation in the liberty they enjoyed. The corruption of morals had deprived them of their empire. We have just reviewed the whole history of Venice, and we have not once seen them exercise the slightest influence." — DARU: *Hist. de la Répub. de l'énie*, vol. v. p. 95.

LONDON:
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

["CAIN" was begun at Ravenna, on the 16th of July, 1821 — completed on the 9th of September — and published, in the same volume with "Sardanapalus" and "The Two Foscari," in December.

Perhaps no production of Lord Byron has been more generally admired, on the score of ability, than this "Mystery;" — certainly none, on first appearing, exposed the author to a fiercer tempest of personal abuse. Besides being unmercifully handled in most of the critical journals of the day, "Cain" was made the subject of a solemn separate essay, entitled "A Remonstrance addressed to Mr Murray respecting a recent Publication — by Oxoniensis;" of which we may here preserve a specimen: —

"There is a method of producing conviction, not to be found in any of the treatises on logic, but which I am persuaded, you could be quickly made to understand; it is the *argumentum ad crumenam*, and this, I trust, will be brought home to you in a variety of ways. not least, I expect, in the profit you hope to make by the offending publication. As a bookseller, I conclude you have but one standard of poetic excellence, — the extent of your sale. Without assuming any thing beyond the bounds of ordinary foresight, I venture to foretell, that in this case you will be mistaken; the book will disappoint your cupidity, as much as it discredits your feeling and discretion. Your noble employer has deceived you, Mr. Murray: he has profited by the celebrity of his name to palm upon you obsolete trash, the very off-scourings of Bayle and Voltaire, which he has made you pay for as though it were first-rate poetry and sound metaphysics. But I tell you truly: if you doubt it, you may consult any of the literary gentlemen, who frequent your reading-room, that this poem, this 'Mystery,' with which you have insulted us, is nothing more than a cento from Voltaire's novels, and the most objectionable articles in Bayle's Dictionary, served up in clumsy cuttings of ten syllables, for the purpose of giving it the guise of poetry.

"Still, though 'Cain' has no claims to originality, there are other objects to which it may be made subservient, and so well are the noble author's schemes arranged, that in some of them he will be sure to succeed.

" In the first place, this publication may be useful as a financial measure. It may seem hard to suspect, that the high-souled philosophy, of which his Lordship makes profession, could be 'servile to the influence' of money; but you could tell us Sir, if you would, what sort of a hand your noble friend is at a bargain; whether Plutus does not sometimes go shares with Apollo in his inspirations.

" In the second place (second I mean in point of order, for I do not presume to decide which motive predominates in his Lordship's mind), the blasphemous impieties of 'Cain,' though nothing more in reality than the echo of often refuted sophisms, by being newly dressed and put forth in a form easy to be remembered, may produce considerable effect, that is, they may mislead the ignorant, unsettle the wavering, or confirm the hardened sceptic in his misbelief. These are consequences which Lord Byron must have contemplated; with what degree of complacency he alone can tell.

" But, in the third place, if neither of these things happens, and 'Cain' should not prove either lucrative or mischievous, there is another point which Lord Byron has secured to himself, so that he cannot be deprived of it, — the satisfaction of insulting those from whom he differs both in faith and practice. — Now, at last, he quarrels with the very conditions of humanity, rebels against that Providence which guides and governs all things, and dares to adopt the language which had never before been attributed to any being but one, 'Evil, be thou my good.' Such, as far as we can judge, is Lord Byron."

This critic's performance is thus alluded to in one of Lord Byron's letters to Mr. Douglas Kinnaird: — "I know nothing of Rivington's 'Remonstrance' by the 'eminent Churchman:' but I suppose the man wants a living."

On hearing that his publisher was threatened with more serious annoyances, in consequence of the appearance of the "Mystery," Lord Byron addressed the following letter to Mr. Murray: —

"Pisa, February 8. 1822.

"Attacks upon me were to be expected; but I perceive *one* upon you in the rapers, which I confess that I did not expect. How, or in what manner, *you* can be considered responsible for what I publish, I am at a loss to conceive.

HEAVEN AND EARTH:

A MYSTERY.

FOUNDED ON THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE IN GENESIS, CHAP. VI.

“And it came to pass . . . that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.”¹

¹ [“Heaven and Earth” was written at Ravenna, in October, 1821. In forwarding it to Mr. Murray, in the following month, Lord Byron says — “Enclosed is a Lyrical Drama, entitled ‘A Mystery.’ You will find it pious enough, I trust — at least some of the chorus might have been written by Sternhold and Hopkins themselves for that, and perhaps for melody. As it is longer, and more lyrical and Græek, than I intended at first, I have not divided it into acts, but called what I have sent *Part First*; as there is a suspension of the action, which may either close there without impropriety, or be continued in a way that I have in view. I wish the first part to be published before the second; because, if it don’t succeed, it is better to stop there, than to go on in a fruitless experiment.” Though without delay revised by Mr. Gifford, and printed, this “First Part” was not published till 1822, when it appeared in the second number of the “Liberal.” The “Mystery” was never completed.]

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

- Angels.* — SAMIASA.
AZAZIEL.
RAPHAEL the Archangel.
Men. — NOAH and his Sons.
IRAD. †
JAPHET.
Women. — ANAH.
AHOLIBAMAH.
-

Chorus of Spirits of the Earth. — Chorus of Mortals.

HEAVEN AND EARTH.

PART I.

SCENE I.

*A woody and mountainous district near Mount
Ararat. — Time, midnight.*

Enter ANAH and AHOLIBAMAH.¹

Anah. OUR father sleeps : it is the hour when they
Who love us are accusom'd to descend
'Through the deep clouds o'er rock^y Ararat : —
How my heart beats !

¹ [The great power of this "Mystery" is in its fearless and daring simplicity. Lord Byron faces at once all the grandeur of his sublime subject. He seeks for nothing, but it rises before him in its death-doomed magnificence. Man, or angel, or demon, the being who mourns, or laments, or exults, is driven to speak by his own soul. The angels deign not to use many words, even to their beautiful paramours ; and they scorn Noah and his sententious sons. Mortal creatures, conscious of their own wickedness, have heard awful predictions of the threatened flood, and all their lives are darkened with terror. But the sons of God have been dwellers on earth, and women's hearts have been stirred by the beauty of these celestial visitants. Anah and Aholibamah, two of these angel-stricken maidens, come wandering along while others sleep, to pour forth their invocations to their demon lovers. They are of very different characters : Anah, soft, gentle, and submissive ; Aholibamah, proud, impetuous, and aspiring — the one loving in fear, and the other in ambition. — WILSON.]

Aho. Let us proceed upon
Our invocation.

Anah. But the stars are hidden.
I tremble.

Aho. So do I, but not with fear
Of aught save their delay.

Anah. My sister, though
I love Azaziel more than — oh, too much !
What was I going to say ? my heart grows impious.

Aho. And where is the impiety of loving
Celestial natures ?

Anah. But, Aholibamah,
I love our God less since his angel loved me :
This cannot be of good ; and though I know not
That I do wrong, I feel a thousand fears
Which are not ominous of right.

Aho. Then wed thee
Unto some son of clay, and toil and spin !
There's Japhet loves thee well, hath loved thee long :
Marry, and bring forth dust !

Anah. I should have loved
Azaziel not less, were he mortal ; yet
I am glad he is not. I can not outlive him.
And when I think that his immortal wings
Will one day hover o'er the sepulchre
Of the poor child of clay which so adored him,
As he adores the Highest, death becomes
Less terrible ; but yet I pity him :
His grief will be of ages, or at least
Mine would be such for him, were I the seraph,
And he the perishable.

Aho. Rather say,
That he will single forth some other daughter
Of Earth, and love her as he once loved Anah.

Anah. And if it should be so, and she loved him,
Better thus than that he should weep for me.

Aho. If I thought thus of Samiasa's love,
All seraph as he is, I'd spurn him from me.
But to our invocation! — 'T is the hour.

Anah. Seraph!

From thy sphere!

Whatever star contain thy glory;
In the eternal depths of heaven
Albeit thou watchest with "the seven,"¹
Though through space infinite and hoary
Before thy bright wings worlds be driven,
Yet hear!

Oh! think of her who holds thee dear
And though she nothing is to thee,
Yet think that thou art all to her.
Thou canst not tell, — and never be
Such pangs decreed to aught save me, —
The bitterness of tears.

Eternity is in thine years,
Unborn, undying beauty in thine eyes;
With me thou canst not sympathise,
Except in love, and there thou must
Acknowledge that more loving dust
Ne'er wept beneath the skies.
Thou walk'st thy many worlds, thou see'st
The face of him who made thee great,
As he hath made me of the least
Of those cast out from Eden's gate:
Yet, Seraph dear!

Oh hear!

For thou hast loved me, and I would not die
Until I know what I must die in knowing,
That thou forget'st in thine eternity
Her whose heart death could not keep from
o'erflowing

¹ The archangels, said to be seven in number, and to occupy the eighth rank in the celestial hierarchy.

For thee, immortal essence as thou art !
 Great is their love who love in sin and fear ;
 And such, I feel, are waging in my heart
 A war unworthy : to an Adamite
 Forgive, my Seraph ! that such thoughts appear,
 For sorrow is our element ;

Delight

An Eden kept afar from sight,
 Though sometimes with our visions blent.
 The hour is near

Which tells me we are not abandon'd quite. —

Appear ! Appear !

Seraph !

My own Azazel ! be but here,
 And leave the stars to their own light.

*Aho.** Samiasa !

Wheresoe'er

Thou rulest in the upper air —

Or warring with the spirits who may dare

Dispute with him

Who made all empires, empire ; or recalling
 Some wandering star, which shoots through the
 abyss,

Whose tenants dying, while their world is
 falling,

Share the dim destiny of clay in this ;

Or joining with the inferior cherubim,

Thou deignest to partake their hymn —

Samiasa !

I call thee, I await thee, and I love thee.

Many may worship thee, that will I not :

If that thy spirit down to mine may move thee,

Descend and share my lot !

Though I be formed of clay

And thou of beams

More bright than those of day
On Eden's streams,
'Thine immortality can not repay
With love more warm than mine
My love. There is a ray
In me, which, though forbidden yet to shine,
I feel was lighted at thy God's and thine.
It may be hidden long : death and decay
Our mother Eve bequeath'd us — but my heart
Defies it : though this life must pass away,
Is *that* a cause for thee and me to part ?
Thou art immortal — so am I : I feel —
I feel my immortality o'ersweep
All pains, all tears, all fears, and peal,
Like the eternal thunders of the deep,
Into my ears this truth — “ 'Thou liv'st for ever ! ”

But if it be in joy
I know not, nor would know ;
That secret rests with the Almighty giver,
Who folds in clouds the founts of bliss and woe.
But thee and me he never can destroy ;
Change us he may, but not o'erwhelm ; we are
Of as eternal essence, and must war
With him if he will war with us : with *thee*
I can share all things, even immortal sorrow ;
For thou hast ventured to share life with *me*,
And shall *I* shrink from thine eternity ?
No ! though the serpent's sting should pierce me
thorough,
And thou thyself wert like the serpent, coil
Around me still ! and I will smile,
And curse thee not ; but hold
Thee in as warm a fold
As ——— but descend, and prove
A mortal's love

For an immortal. If the skies contain
More joy than thou canst give and take, remain !¹

Anah. Sister ! sister ! I view them winging
Their bright way through the parted night.

Aho. The clouds from off their pinions flinging,
As though they bore to-morrow's light.

Anah. But if our father see the sight !

Aho. He would but deem it was the moon
Rising unto some sorcerer's tune
An hour too soon.

Anah. They come ! *he* comes ! — Azazel !

Aho.

Haste

To meet them ! Oh ! for wings to bear
My spirit, while they hover there,
To Samiasa's breast !

Anah. Lo ! they have kindled all the west,
Like a returning sunset ; — lo !

On Ararat's late secret crest
A mild and many-colour'd bow,
The remnant of their flashing path,
Now shines ! and now, behold ! it hath
Return'd to night, as rippling foam,

Which the leviathan hath lash'd
From his unfathomable home,
When sporting on the face of the calm deep,

Subsides soon after he again hath dashed
Down, down, to where the ocean's fountains sleep.²

¹ [This invocation is extremely beautiful: its chief beauty lies in the continuous and meandering flow of its impassioned versification. At its close,—and it might well win down to earth erring angels from heaven,—the maidens disappear in the midnight darkness, hoping the presence of their celestial lovers.—WILSON.]

² [Lord Byron here takes a wide career, and is sometimes obscure and confused; but the flashes of fire continually break through, and illumine the clouds of smoke and vapour. The extravagance is dictated by passion. His muse, even in her riddles and digressions, has a sybil-like, prophetic fury.—JEFFREY.]

Aho. They have touch'd earth ! Samiasa !

Anah. My Azaziel
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Enter IRAD and JAPHET.

Irak. Despond not : wherefore wilt thou wander
thus

To add thy silence to the silent night,
And lift thy tearful eye unto the stars ?
They cannot aid thee.

Japh. But they soothe me — now
Perhaps she looks upon them as I look.
Methinks a being that is beautiful
Becometh more so as it looks on beauty,
The eternal beauty of undying things.
Oh, Anah !

Irak. But she loves thee not.

Japh. Alas !

Irak. And proud Aholibamah spurns me also.

Japh. I feel for thee too.

Irak. Let her keep her pride,
Mine hath enabled me to bear her scorn :
It may be, time too will avenge it.

Japh. Canst thou

Find joy in such a thought ?

Irak. Nor joy nor sorrow.

I loved her well ; I would have loved her better,
Had love been met with love : as 't is, I leave her
To brighter destinies, if so she deems them.

Japh. What destinies ?

Irak. I have some cause to think
She loves another.

Japh. Anah !

Irad. No ; her sister. c

Japh. What other ?

Irad. That I know not ; but her air,
If not her words, tells me she loves another.

Japh. Ay, but not Anah : she but loves her God.

Irad. Whate'er she loveth, so she loves thee not,
What can it profit thee ? ¹

Japh. True, nothing ; but
I love.

Irad. And so did I.

Japh. And now thou lov'st not,
Or think'st thou lov'st not, art thou happier ?

Irad. Yes.

Japh. I pity thee.

Irad. Me ! why ?

Japh. For being happy,
Deprived of that which makes my misery.

Irad. I take thy taunt as part of thy distemper,
And would not feel as thou dost for more shekels
Than all our father's herds would bring, if weigh'd
Against the metal of the sons of Cain —
The yellow dust they try to barter with us,
As if such useless and discolour'd trash,
The refuse of the earth, could be received
For milk, and wool, and flesh, and fruits, and all
Our flocks and wilderness afford. — Go, Japhet,
Sigh to the stars, as wolves howl to the moon —
I must back to my rest.

Japh. And so would I
If I could rest.

¹ [This is one of those bitter, taunting sarcasms that escape from Lord Byron's pen, in spite of himself. Japhet is afterwards introduced alone, in a mountainous cave ; and his soliloquy, bemoaning his own fate, and the approaching destruction of mankind, is interrupted by a laugh of demons, rejoicing over the event. This scene is terrific. — JEFFREY.]

Irad. Thou wilt not to our tents then ?

Japh. No, *Irad* ; I will to the cavern, whose
Mouth they say opens from the internal world,
To let the inner spirits of the earth
Forth when they walk its surface.

Irad. Wherefore so ?
What wouldst thou there ?

Japh. Soothe further my sad spirit
With gloom as sad : it is a hopeless spot,
And I am hopeless.

Irad. But 't is dangerous ;
Strange sounds and sights have peopled it with terrors.
I must go with thee.

Japh. *Irad*, no ; believe me
I feel no evil thought, and fear no evil.

Irad. But evil things will be thy foe the more
As not being of them : turn thy steps aside,
Or let mine be with thine.

Japh. No, neither, *Irad* ;
I must proceed alone.

Irad. Then peace be with thee !

[Exit *IRAD*.]

Japh. (solus). Peace ! I have sought it where it
should be found,

In love — with love, too, which perhaps deserved it ;
And, in its stead, a heaviness of heart —
A weakness of the spirit — listless days,
And nights inexorable to sweet sleep —
Have come upon me. Peace ! what peace ? the calm
Of desolation, and the stillness of
The untrodden forest, only broken by
The sweeping tempest through its groaning boughs ;
Such is the sullen or the fitful state
Of my mind overworn. The earth's grown wicked,
And many signs and portents have proclaim'd
A change at hand, and an o'erwhelming doom

To perishable beings. Oh, my Anah !
When the dread hour denounced shall open wide
The fountains of the deep, how mightest thou
Have lain within this bosom, folded from
The elements ; this bosom, which in vain
Hath beat for thee, and then will beat more vainly,
While thine —— Oh, God ! at least remit to her
Thy wrath ! for she is pure amidst the failing
As a star in the clouds, which cannot quench,
Although they obscure it for an hour. My Anah !
How would I have adored thee, but thou wouldst not ;
And still would I redeem thee — see thee live
When ocean is earth's grave, and, unopposed
By rock or shallow, the leviathan,
Lord of the shoreless sea and watery world,
Shall wonder at his boundlessness of realm.

[Exit JAPHET.

Enter NOAH and SHEM.

Noah. Where is thy brother Japhet ?

Shem. He went forth,
According to his wont, to meet with Irad,
He said ; but, as I fear, to bend his steps
Towards Anah's tents, round which he hovers nightly,
Like a dove round and round its pillaged nest ;
Or else he walks the wild up to the cavern
Which opens to the heart of Ararat.

Noah. What doth he there ? It is an evil spot
Upon an earth all evil ; for things worse
Than even wicked men resort there : he
Still loves this daughter of a fated race,
Although he could not wed her if she loved him,
And that she doth not. Oh, the unhappy hearts
Of men ! that one of my blood, knowing well
The destiny and evil of these days,
And that the hour approacheth, should indulge

In such forbidden yearnings ! Lead the way ;
He must be sought for !

Shem. Go not forward, father .
I will seek Japhet.

Noah. Do not fear for me :
All evil things are powerless on the man
Selected by Jehovah. — Let us on.

Shem. To the tents of the father of the sisters ?

Noah. No ; to the cavern of the Caucasus.

[*Exeunt NOAH and SHEM.*]

SCENE III.

The mountains. — A cavern, and the rocks of Caucasus.

Japh. (solus). Ye wilds, that look eternal ; and
thou cave,
Which seem'st unfathomable ; and ye mountains,
So varied and so terrible in beauty ;
Here, in your rugged majesty of rocks
And toppling trees that twine their roots with stone
In perpendicular places, where the foot
Of man would tremble, could he reach them — yes,
Ye look eternal ! Yet, in a few days,
Perhaps even hours, ye will be changed, rent, hurl'd
Before the mass of waters ; and yon cave,
Which seems to lead into a lower world,
Shall have its depths search'd by the sweeping wave,
And dolphins gambol in the lion's den !
And man — Oh, men ! my fellow-beings ! Who
Shall weep above your universal grave,
Save I ? Who shall be left to weep ? My kinsmen,
Alas ! what am I better than ye are,
That I must live beyond ye ? Where shall be
The pleasant places where I thought of Anah

While I had hope ? or the more savage haunts,
Scarce less beloved, where I despair'd for her ?
And can it be ! — Shall yon exulting peak,
Whose glittering top is like a distant star,
Lie low beneath the boiling of the deep ?
No more to have the morning sun break forth,
And scatter back the mists in floating folds
From its tremendous brow ? no more to have
Day's broad orb drop behind its head at even,
Leaving it with a crown of many hues ?
No more to be the beacon of the world,
For angels to alight on, as the spot
Nearest the stars ? And can those words "*no more*"
Be meant for thee, for all things, save for us,
And the predestined creeping things reserved
By my sire to Jehovah's bidding ? May
He preserve *them*, and *I* not have the power
To snatch the loveliest of earth's daughters from
A doom which even some serpent, with his mate,
Shall 'scape to save his kind to be prolong'd,
To hiss and sting through some emerging world,
Reeking and dank from out the slime, whose ooze
Shall slumber o'er the wreck of this until
The salt morass subside into a sphere
Beneath the sun, and be the monument,
The sole and undistinguish'd sepulchre,
Of yet quick myriads of all life ? How much
Breath will be still'd at once ! All beauteous world !
So young, so mark'd out for destruction, I
With a cleft heart look on thee day by day,
And night by night, thy number'd days and nights.
I cannot save thee, cannot save even her
Whose love had made me love thee more ; but as
A portion of thy dust, I cannot think
Upon thy coming doom without a feeling
Such as — Oh God ! and canst thou — [*He pauses.*

A rushing sound from the cavern is heard, and shouts of laughter — afterwards a Spirit passes.

Japh. In the name
Of the Most High, what art thou ?

Spirit (laughs). Ha ! ha ! ha !

Japh. By all that earth holds holiest, speak !

Spirit (laughs). Ha ! ha !

Japh. By the approaching deluge ! by the earth

Which will be strangled by the ocean ! by

The deep which will lay open all her fountains !

The heaven which will convert her clouds to seas,

And the Omnipotent who makes and crushes !

Thou unknown, terrible, and indistinct,

Yet awful Thing of Shadows, speak to me !

Why dost thou laugh that horrid laugh ?

Spirit. Why weep'st thou ?

Japh. For earth and all her children.

Spirit. Ha ! ha ! ha ! [*Spirit vanishes.*

Japh. How the fiend mocks the tortures of a world,

The coming desolation of an orb,

On which the sun shall rise and warm no life !

How the earth sleeps ! and all that in it is

Sleep too upon the very eve of death !

Why should they wake to meet it ? What is here,

Which look like death in life, and speak like things

Born ere this dying world ? They come like clouds !

[*Various Spirits pass from the cavern.*

Spirit. Rejoice !

The abhorred race

Which could not keep in Eden their high place,

But listen'd to the voice

Of knowledge without power,

Are nigh the hour

Of death !

Not slow, not single, not by sword, nor sorrow,
Nor years, nor heart-break, nor time's sapping motion,
Shall they drop off. Behold their last to-morrow !

Earth shall be ocean !

And no breath,

Save of the winds, be on the unbounded wave !
Angels shall tire their wings, but find no spot :
Not even a rock from out the liquid grave

Shall lift its point to save,

Or show the place where strong Despair hath died,
After long looking o'er the ocean wide

For the expected ebb which cometh not :

All shall be void,

Destroy'd !

Another element shall be the lord

Of life, and the abhorr'd

Children of dust be quench'd ; and of each hue
Of earth nought left but the unbroken blue ;

And of the variegated mountain

Shall nought remain

Unchanged, or of the level plain ;

Cedar and pine shall lift their tops in vain :

All merged within the universal fountain,

Man, earth, and fire, shall die,

And sea and sky

Look vast and lifeless in the eternal eye.

Upon the foam

Who shall erect a home ?

Japh. (coming forward). My sire !

Earth's seed shall not expire ;

Only the evil shall be put away

From day.

Avant ! ye exulting demons of the waste !

Who howl your hideous joy

When God destroys whom you dare not destroy ;

Hence ! haste !

Back to your inner caves !
Until the waves
Shall search you in your secret place,
And drive your sullen race
Forth, to be roll'd upon the tossing winds,
In restless wretchedness along all space !
Spirit. Son of the saved !
When thou and thine have braved
The wide and warring element ;
When the great barrier of the deep is rent,
Shall thou and thine be good or happy ? — No !
Thy new world and new race shall be of woe —
Less goodly in their aspect, in their years
Less than the glorious giants, who
Yet walk the world in pride,
The Sons of Heaven by many a mortal bride. •
Thine shall be nothing of the past, save tears.
And art thou not ashamed
Thus to survive,
And eat, and drink, and wive ?
With a base heart so far subdued and tamed,
As even to hear this wide destruction named,
Without such grief and courage, as should rather
Bid thee await the world-dissolving wave,
Than seek a shelter with thy favour'd father,
And build thy city o'er the drown'd earth's grave ?
Who would outlive their kind,
Except the base and blind ?
Mine
Hateth thine
As of a different order in the sphere,
But not our own.
There is not one who hath not left a throne
Vacant in heaven to dwell in darkness here,
Rather than see his mates endure alone.

Go, wretch ! and give
A life like thine to other wretches — live ! *

And when the annihilating waters roar
Above what they have done,
Envy the giant patriarchs then no more,
And scorn thy sire as the surviving one !

Thyself for being his son !

Chorus of Spirits issuing from the cavern.

Rejoice !

No more the human voice
Shall vex our joys in middle air

With prayer ;

No more

Shall they adore ;

And we, who ne'er for ages have adored

The prayer-exacting Lord,
To whom the omission of a sacrifice

Is vice ;

We, we shall view the deep's salt sources pour'd
Until one element shall do the work

Of all in chaos ; until they,

The creatures proud of their poor clay,
Shall perish, and their bleached bones shall lurk
In caves, in dens, in clefts of mountains, where
The deep shall follow to their latest lair ;

Where even the brutes, in their despair,
Shall cease to prey on man and on each other,

And the striped tiger shall lie down to die
Beside the lamb, as though he were his brother ;

Till all things shall be as they were,
Silent and uncreated, save the sky :

• While a brief truce

Is made with Death, who shall forbear
The little remnant of the past creation,
To generate new nations for his use ;
This remnant, floating o'er the undulation

Of the subsiding deluge, from its slime,
When the hot sun hath baked the reeking soil
Into a world, shall give again to Time
New beings — years — diseases — sorrow — crime —
With all companionship of hate and toil,
Until ——

Japh. (interrupting them). The eternal will
Shall deign to expound this dream
Of good and evil ; and redeem
Unto himself all times, all things ;
And, gather'd under his almighty wings,
Abolish hell !

And to the expiated Earth
Restore the beauty of her birth,
Her Eden in an endless paradise,
Where man no more can fall as once he fell,
And even the very demons shall do well !
Spirits. And when shall take effect this wondrous
spell ?

Japh. When the Redeemer cometh ; first in pain,
And then in glory.

Spirit. Meantime still struggle in the mortal chain,
Till earth wax hoary ;
War with yourselves, and hell, and heaven, in vain,
Until the clouds look gory
With the blood reeking from each battle plain ;
New times, new climes, new arts, new men ; but still,
The same old tears, old crimes, and oldest ill,
Shall be amongst your race in different forms ;
But the same moral storms
Shall oversweep the future, as the waves
In a few hours the glorious giants' graves. ¹

¹ " And there were giants in the earth in those days, and after ;
mighty men, which were of old, men of renown."— *Genesis*.

Chorus of Spirits.

Brethren, rejoice !

Mortal, farewell !

Hark ! hark ! already we can hear the voice

Of growing ocean's gloomy swell ;

The winds, too, plume their piercing wings ;

The clouds have nearly fill'd their springs ;

The fountains of the great deep shall be broken,

And heaven set wide her windows ; ¹ while man-kind

View, unacknowledged, each tremendous token —

Still, as they were from the beginning, blind.

We hear the sound they cannot hear,

The mustering thunders of the threatening sphere ;

Yet a few hours their coming is delay'd ;

Their flashing banners, folded still on high,

Yet undisplay'd,

Save to the Spirit's all-pervading eye.

How ! how ! oh Earth !

Thy death is nearer than thy recent birth :

Tremble, ye mountains, soon to shrink below

The ocean's overflow !

The wave shall break upon your cliffs ; and shells,

The little shells, of ocean's least things be

Deposed where now the eagle's offspring dwells —

How shall he shriek o'er the remorseless sea !

And call his nestlings up with fruitless yell,

Unanswer'd, save by the encroaching swell ; —

While man shall long in vain for his broad wings,

The wings which could not save : —

Where could he rest them, while the whole space brings

Nought to his eye beyond the deep, his grave ?

Brethren, rejoice !

¹ " The same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." — *Ibid.*

And loudly lift each superhuman voice —
All die,
Save the slight remnant of Seth's seed —
The seed of Seth,
Exempt for future sorrow's sake from death.
But of the sons of Cain
None shall remain;
And all his goodly daughters
Must lie beneath the desolating waters;
Or, floating upward, with their long hair laid
Along the wave, the cruel heaven upbraid,
Which would not spare
Beings even in death so fair.
It is decreed,
All die!
And to the universal human cry
The universal silence shall succeed!
Fly, brethren, fly!
But still rejoice!
We fell!
They fall!
So perish all

These petty foes of Heaven who shrink from hell!

[*The Spirits disappear, soaring upwards.*

Japh. (solus). God hath proclaim'd the destiny of
earth;

My father's ark of safety hath announced it;
The very demons shriek it from their caves;
The scroll¹ of Enoch prophesied it long
In silent books, which, in their silence, say
More to the mind than thunder to the ear:
And yet men listen'd not, nor listen; but
Walk darkling to their doom; which, though so nigh,
Shakes them no more in their dim disbelief,

¹ The book of Enoch, preserved by the Ethiopians, is said by them to be anterior to the flood.

Than their last cries shall shake the Almighty purpose,
Or deaf obedient ocean, which fulfils it.
No sign yet hangs its banner in the air ;
The clouds are few, and of their wonted texture ;
The sun will rise upon the earth's last day
As on the fourth day of creation, when
God said unto him, " Shine ! " and he broke forth
Into the dawn, which lighted not the yet
Unform'd forefather of mankind — but roused
Before the human orison the earlier
Made and far sweeter voices of the birds,
Which in the open firmament of heaven
Have wings like angels, and like them salute
Heaven first each day before the Adamites !
Their matins now draw nigh — the east is kindling —
And they will sing ! and day will break ! Both near,
So near the awful close ! For these must drop
Their outworn pinions on the deep ; and day,
After the bright course of a few brief morrows, —
Ay, day will rise ; but upon what ? — a chaos,
Which was ere day ; and which, renew'd, makes time
Nothing ! for, without life, what are the hours ?
No more to dust than is eternity
Unto Jehovah, who created both.
Without him, even eternity would be
A void : without man, time, as made for man,
Dies with man, and is swallow'd in that deep
Which has no fountain ; as his race will be
Devour'd by that which drowns his infant world. —
What have we here ? Shapes of both earth and air ?
No — *all* of heaven, they are so beautiful.
I cannot trace their features ; but their forms,
How lovelily they move along the side
Of the grey mountain, scattering its mist !
And after the swart savage spirits, whose
Infernal immortality pour'd forth

Their impious hymn of triumph, they shall be
Welcome as Eden. It may be they come
To tell me the reprieve of our young world,
For which I have so often pray'd — They come!
Anah! oh, God! and with her —

Enter SAMIASA, AZAZIEL, ANAH, and AHOLIBAMAH.

Anah.

Japhet!

Sam.

Lo!

A son of Adam!

Aza. What doth the earth-born here,
While all his race are slumbering?

Japh. Angel! what
Dost thou on earth when thou shouldst be on high? .

Aza. Know'st thou not, or forgett'st thou, that a part
Of our great function is to guard thine earth? •

Japh. But all good angels have forsaken earth,
Which is condemn'd; nay, even the evil fly
The approaching chaos. Anah! Anah! my
In vain, and long, and still to be beloved!
Why walk'st thou with this spirit, in those hours
When no good spirit longer lights below?

Anah. Japhet, I cannot answer thee; yet, yet
Forgive me —

Japh. May the Heaven, which soon no more
Will pardon, do so! for thou art greatly tempted.

Aho. Back to thy tents, insulting son of Noah!
We know thee not.

Japh. The hour may come when thou
May'st know me better; and thy sister know
Me still the same which I have ever been.

Sam. Son of the patriarch, who hath ever been •
Upright before his God, whate'er thy gifts,
And thy words seem of sorrow, mix'd with wrath,
How have Azazel, or myself, brought on thee
Wrong?

Japh. Wrong ! the greatest of all wrongs ; but thou Say'st well ; though she be dust, I did not, could not, Deserve her. Farewell, Anah ! I have said That word so often ! but now say it, ne'er To be repeated. Angel ! or whate'er Thou art, or must be soon, hast thou the power To save this beautiful — *these* beautiful Children of Cain ?

Aza.

From what ?

Japh. And is it so,
That ye too know not ? Angels ! angels ! ye
Have shared man's sin, and, it may be, now must
Partake his punishment ; or, at the least,
My sorrow.

Sam. Sorrow ! I ne'er thought till now
To hear an Adamite speak riddles to me.

Japh. And hath not the Most High expounded
them ?

Then ye are lost, as they are lost.

Aho. So be it !
If they love as they are loved, they will not shrink
More to be mortal, than I would to dare
An immortality of agonies
With Samiasa !

Anah. Sister ! sister ! speak not
Thus.

Aza. Fearest thou, my Anah ?

Anah. Yes, for thee .
I would resign the greater remnant of
This little life of mine, before one hour
Of thine eternity should know a pang.

Japh. It is for *him*, then ! for the seraph thou
Hast left me ! That is nothing, if thou hast not
Left thy God too ! for unions like to these,
Between a mortal and an immortal, cannot
Be happy or be hallow'd. We are sent

Upon the earth to toil and die : and they
Are made to minister on high unto
The Highest : but if he can *save* thee, soon
The hour will come in which celestial aid
Alone can do so.

Anah. Ah ! he speaks of death.

Sam. Of death to *us* ! and those who are with us !
But that the man seems full of sorrow, I
Could smile.

Japh. I grieve not for myself, nor fear
I am safe, not for my own deserts, but those
Of a well-doing sire, who hath been found
Righteous enough to save his children. Would
His power was greater of redemption ! or
That by exchanging my own life for hers,
Who could alone have made mine happy, she,
The last and loveliest of Cain's race, could share
The ark which shall receive a remnant of
The seed of Seth !

Aho. And dost thou think that we,
With Cain's, the eldest born of Adam's, blood
Warm in our veins, — strong Cain ! who was begotten
In Paradise, — would mingle with Seth's children ?
Seth, the last offspring of old Adam's dotage ?
No, not to save all earth, were earth in peril !
Our race hath always dwelt apart from thine
From the beginning, and shall do so ever.

Japh. I did not speak to thee, Aholibamah !
Too much of the forefather whom thou vauntest
Has come down in that haughty blood which springs
From him who shed the first, and that a brother's !
But thou, my Anah ! let me call thee mine,
Albeit thou art not ; 't is a word I cannot
Part with, although I must from thee. My Anah !
Thou who dost rather make me dream that Abel

Had left a daughter, whose pure pious race
Survived in thee, so much unlike thou art
The rest of the stern Cainites, save in beauty,
For all of them are fairest in their favour —

Aho. (interrupting him). And wouldst thou have her
like our father's foe

In mind, in soul? If *I* partook thy thought,
And dream'd that aught of *Abel* was in *her*! —
Get thee hence, son of Noah; thou makest strife.

Japh. Offspring of Cain, thy father did so!

Aho.

But

He slew not Seth: and what hast thou to do
With other deeds between his God and him?

Japh. Thou speakest well: his God hath judged
him, and

I had not named his deed, but that thyself
Didst seem to glory in him, nor to shrink
From what he had done.

Aho.

He was our fathers' father;

The eldest born of man, the strongest, bravest,
And most enduring: — Shall I blush for him
From whom we had our being? Look upon
Our race; behold their stature and their beauty,
Their courage, strength, and length of days —

Japh.

They are number'd.

Aho. Be it so! but while yet their hours endure,
I glory in my brethren and our fathers.

Japh. My sire and race but glory in their God,
Anah! and thou? —

Anah.

Whate'er our God decrees,

The God of Seth as Cain, I must obey,
And will endeavour patiently to obey.

But could I dare to pray in his dread hour
Of universal vengeance (if such should be),
It would not be to live, alone exempt
Of all my house. My sister! oh, my sister!

What were the world, or other worlds, or all
The brightest future, without the sweet past —
Thy love — my father's — all the life, and all
The things which sprang up with me, like the stars,
Making my dim existence radiant with
Soft lights which were not mine? Aholibamah!
Oh! if there should be mercy — seek it, find it:
I abhor death, because that thou must die.

Aho. What, hath this dreamer, with his father's ark,
The bugbear he hath built to scare the world,
Shaken *my* sister? Are *we* not the loved
Of seraphs? and if we were not, must we
Cling to a son of Noah for our lives?
Rather than thus — But the enthusiast dreams
The worst of dreams, the fantasies engender'd
By hopeless love and heated vigils. Who
Shall shake these solid mountains, this firm earth,
And bid those clouds and waters take a shape
Distinct from that which we and all our sires
Have seen them wear on their eternal way?
Who shall do this?

Japh. He whose one word produced them.

Aho. Who *heard* that word?

Japh. The universe, which leap'd
To life before it. Ah! smilest thou still in scorn?
Turn to thy seraphs: if they attest it not,
They are none.

Sam. Aholibamah, own thy God!

Aho. I have ever hail'd our Maker, Samiasa,
As thine, and mine: a God of love, not sorrow.

Japh. Alas! what else is love but sorrow? Even
He who made earth in love had soon to grieve
Above its first and best inhabitants.

Aho. 'T is said so.

Japh. It is even so.

Enter NOAH and SHEM.

Noah. Japhet ! What
Dost thou here with these children of the wicked ?
Dread'st thou not to partake their coming doom ?

Japh. Father, it cannot be a sin to seek
To save an earth-born being ; and behold,
These are not of the sinful, since they have
The fellowship of angels.

Noah. These are they, then,
Who leave the throne of God, to take them wives
From out the race of Cain ; the sons of heaven,
Who seek earth's daughters for their beauty ?

Aza. Patriarch !
Thou hast said it.

Noah. Woe, woe, woe to such communion !
Has not God made a barrier between earth
And heaven, and limited each, kind to kind ?

Sam. Was not man made in high Jehovah's image ?
Did God not love what he had made ? And what
Do we but imitate and emulate
His love unto created love ?

Noah. I am
But man, and was not made to judge mankind,
Far less the sons of God ; but as our God
Has deign'd to commune with me, and reveal
His judgments, I reply, that the descent
Of seraphs from their everlasting seat
Unto a perishable and perishing,
Even on the very *eve* of *perishing*, world,
Cannot be good.

Aza. What ! though it were to save ?
Noah. Not ye in all your glory can redeem
What he who made you glorious hath condemn'd.
Were your immortal mission safety, 't would
Be general, not for two, though beautiful ;

And beautiful they are, but not the less
Condemn'd.

Japh. Oh, father! say it not.

Noah. Son! son!

If that thou wouldst avoid their doom, forget
That they exist: they soon shall cease to be
While thou shalt be the sire of a new world,
And better.

Japh. Let me die with *this*, and *them*!

Noah. Thou *shouldst* for such a thought, but shalt
not; he

Who *can* redeems thee.

Sam. And why him and thee,
More than what he, thy son, prefers to both?

Noah. Ask him who made thee greater than myself
And mine, but not less subject to his own
Almightiness. And lo! his mildest and
Least to be tempted messenger appears!

Enter RAPHAEL¹ the Archangel.

Raph. Spirits!

Whose seat is near the throne,

What do ye here?

Is thus a seraph's duty to be shown,

Now that the hour is near

When earth must be alone

Return!

Adore and burn,

In glorious homage with the elected "seven."

Your place is heaven.

Sam. Raphael!

The first and fairest of the sons of God,

¹ [In the original MS. "Michael." — "I return you," says Lord Byron to Mr. Murray, "the revise. I have softened the part to which Gifford objected, and changed the name of Michael to Raphael, who was an angel of gentler sympathies." — *Byron Letters*, July 6. 1822.]

How long hath this been law,
 That earth by angels must be left untrod ?
 Earth ! which oft saw
 Jehovah's footsteps not disdain her sod !
 The world he loved, and made
 For love ; and oft have we obey'd
 His frequent mission with delighted pinions :
 Adoring him in his least works display'd ;
 Watching this youngest star of his dominions ;
 And, as the latest birth of his great word,
 Eager to keep it worthy of our Lord.
 Why is thy brow severe ?
 And wherefore speak'st thou of destruction near ?
Raph. Had Samiassa and Azazel been
 In their true place, with the angelic choir,
 Written in fire
 They would have seen
 Jehovah's late decree,
 And not enquired their Maker's breath of me :
 But ignorance must ever be
 A part of sin ;
 And even the spirits' knowledge shall grow less
 As they wax proud within ;
 For Blindness is the first-born of Excess.
 When all good angels left the world, ye stay'd,
 Stung with strange passions, and debased
 By mortal feelings for a mortal maid :
 But ye are pardon'd thus far, and replaced
 With your pure equals. Hence ! away ! away !
 Or stay,
 And lose eternity by that delay !
Aza. And thou ! if earth be thus forbidden
 In the decree
 To us until this moment hidden,
 Dost thou not err as we
 In being here ?

Raph. I came to call ye back to your fit sphere,
In the great name and at the word of God.
Dear, dearest in themselves, and scarce less dear
That which I came to do : till now we trod
Together the eternal space ; together
Let us still walk the stars. True, earth must die !
Her race, return'd into her womb, must wither,
And much which she inherits : but oh ! why
Cannot this earth be made, or be destroy'd,
Without involving ever some vast void
In the immortal ranks ? immortal still
In their immeasurable forfeiture.
Our brother Satan fell ; his burning will
Rather than longer worship dared endure !
But ye who still are pure !
Seraphs ! less mighty than that mightiest one.
Think how he was undone !
And think if tempting man can compensate
For heaven desired too late ?
Long have I warr'd,
Long must I war
With him who deem'd it hard
To be created, and to acknowledge him
Who midst the cherubim
Made him as suns to a dependent star,
Leaving the archangels at his right hand dim.
I loved him — beautiful he was : oh, heaven !
Save *his* who made, what beauty and what power
Was ever like to Satan's ! Would the hour
In which he fell could ever be forgiven !
The wish is impious : but, oh ye !
Yet undestroy'd, be warn'd ! Eternity
With him, or with his God, is in your choice :
He hath not tempted you ; he cannot tempt
The angels, from his further snares exempt :
But man hath listen'd to his voice,

And ye to woman's — beautiful she is,
The serpent's voice less subtle than her kiss.
The snake but vanquish'd dust ; but she will draw
A second host from heaven, to break heaven's law.

Yet, yet, oh fly !

Ye cannot die ;

But they

Shall pass away,

While ye shall fill with shrieks the upper sky

For perishable clay,

Whose memory in your immortality

Shall long outlast the sun which gave them day.

Think how your essence differeth from theirs

In all but suffering ! why partake

The agony to which they must be heirs —

Born to be plough'd with years, and sown with cares,

And reap'd by Death, lord of the human soil ?

Even had their days been left to toil their path

Through time to dust, unshorten'd by God's wrath,

Still they are Evil's prey and Sorrow's spoil.

Aho. Let them fly !

I hear the voice which says that all must die,

Sooner than our white-bearded patriarchs died ;

And that on high

An ocean is prepared,

While from below

The deep shall rise to meet heaven's overflow.

Few shall be spared,

It seems ; and, of that few, the race of Cain

Must lift their eyes to Adam's God in vain.

Sister ! since it is so,

And the eternal Lord

In vain would be implored

For the remission of one hour of woe,

Let us resign even what we have adored,

And meet the wave, as we would meet the sword,

If not unmoved, yet undismay'd,
And ~~w~~ailing less for us than those who shall
Survive in mortal or immortal thrall,

And, when the fatal waters are allay'd,
Weep for the myriads who can weep no more.
Fly, seraphs ! to your own eternal shore,
Where winds nor howl nor waters roar.

Our portion is to die,
And yours to live for ever :
But which is best, a dead eternity,
Or living, is but known to the great Giver.

Obeys him, as we shall obey ;
I would not ~~keep~~ this life of mine in clay
An hour beyond his will ;
Nor see ye lose a portion of his grace,
For all the mercy which Seth's race
Find still.

Fly !
And as your pinions bear ye back to heaven,
Think that my love still mounts with thee on high,
Samiasa !

And if I look up with a tearless eye,
'Tis that an angel's bride disdains to weep, —
Farewell ! Now rise, inexorable deep !
Anah. And must we die ?

And must I lose thee too,
Azazel ?
Oh, my heart ! my heart !
Thy prophecies were true !
And yet thou wert so happy too !
The blow, though not unlook'd for, falls as new :
But yet depart !

Ah ! why ?
Yet let me not retain thee — fly !
My pangs can be but brief ; but thine would be
Eternal, if repulsed from heaven for me.

Too much already hast thou deign'd
To one of Adam's race!
Our doom is sorrow : not to us alone,
But to the spirits who have not disdain'd
To love us, cometh anguish with disgrace.
The first who taught us knowledge hath been hurl'd
From his once archangelic throne
Into some unknown world :
And thou, Azazel ! No —
Thou shalt not suffer woe
For me. Away ! nor weep !
Thou canst not weep ; but yet
May'st suffer more, not weeping : then forget
Her, whom the surges of the all-strangling deep
Can bring no pang like this. Fly ! fly !
Being gone, 't will be less difficult to die.
Japh. Oh say not so !
Father ! and thou, archangel, thou !
Surely celestial mercy lurks below
That pure severe serenity of brow :
Let them not meet this sea without a shore,
Save in our ark, or let me be no more !
Noah. Peace, child of passion, peace !
If not within thy heart, yet with thy tongue
Do God no wrong !
Live as he wills it — die, when he ordains,
A righteous death, unlike the seed of Cain's.
Cease, or be sorrowful in silence ; cease
To weary Heaven's ear with thy selfish plaint.
Wouldst thou have God commit a sin for thee ?
Such would it be
To alter his intent
For a mere mortal sorrow. Be a man !
And bear what Adam's race must bear, and can.
Japh. Ay, father ! but when they are gone,
And we are all alone,

Floating upon the azure desert, and
The depth beneath us hides our own dear land,
And dearer, silent friends and brethren, all
Buried in its immeasurable breast,
Who, who, our tears, our shrieks, shall then command?
Can we in desolation's peace have rest?

Oh God! be thou a God, and spare

Yet while 't is time!

Renew not Adam's fall:

Mankind were then but twain,

But they are numerous now as are the waves

And the tremendous rain,

Whose drops shall be less thick than would their
graves,

Were graves permitted to the seed of Cain.

Noah. Silence, vain boy! each word of thine's a
crime.

Angel! forgive this stripling's fond despair.

Raph. Seraphs! these mortals speak in passion: Ye!
Who are, or should be, passionless and pure,
May now return with me.

Sam.

It may not be:

We have chosen, and will endure.

Raph. Say'st thou?

Aza.

He hath said it, and I say, Amen!

Raph. Again!

Then from this hour,

Shorn as ye are of all celestial power,

And aliens from your God,

Farewell!

Japh.

Alas! where shall they dwell?

Hark, hark! Deep sounds, and deeper still,

Are howling from the mountain's bosom:

There's not a breath of wind upon the hill,

Yet quivers every leaf, and drops each blossom:

Earth groans as if beneath a heavy load.

Noah. Hark, hark ! the sea-birds cry !
 In clouds they overspread the lurid sky,
 And hover round the mountain, where before
 Never a white wing, wetted by the wave,
 Yet dared to soar,
 Even when the waters wax'd too fierce to brave.
 Soon it shall be their only shore,
 And then, no more !

Japh. The sun ! the sun !
 He riseth, but his better light is gone ;
 And a black circle, bound
 His glaring disk around,
 Proclaims earth's last of summer days hath shone !
 The clouds return into the hues of night,
 Save where their brazen-colour'd edges streak
 The verge where brighter morns were wont to break.

Noah. And lo ! yon flash of light,
 The distant thunder's harbinger, appears !
 It cometh ! hence, away !

Leave to the elements their evil prey !
 Hence to where our all-hallowed ark uprears
 Its safe and wreckless sides !

Japh. Oh, father, stay !
 Leave not my Anah to the swallowing tides !

Noah. Must we not leave all life to such ? Begone !

Japh. Not I.

Noah. Then die

With them !

How darest thou look on that prophetic sky,
 And seek to save what all things now condemn,
 In overwhelming unison

With just Jehovah's wrath !

Japh. Can rage and justice join in the same path ?

Noah. Blasphemer ! darest thou murmur even now !

Raph. Patriarch, be still a father ! smooth thy
 brow :

Thy son, despite his folly, shall not sink :
He knows not what he says, yet shall not drink
With sobs the salt foam of the swelling waters ;
But be, when passion passeth, good as thou,
Nor perish like heaven's children with man's
daughters.

Aho. The tempest cometh ; heaven and earth unite
For the annihilation of all life.

Unequal is the strife
Between our strength and the Eternal Might !

Sam. But ours is with thee ; we will bear ye far
To some untroubled star,

Where thou and Anah shalt partake our lot :

And if thou dost not weep for thy lost earth,
Our forfeit heaven shall also be forgot.

Anah. Oh ! my dear father's tents, my place of birth,
And mountains, land, and woods ! when ye are not,
Who shall dry up my tears ?

Aza. Thy spirit-lord.
Fear not ; though we are shut from heaven,
Yet much is ours, whence we can not be driven.

Raph. Rebel ! thy words are wicked, as thy deeds
Shall henceforth be but weak : the flaming sword,
Which chased the first-born out of Paradise,
Still flashes in the angelic hands.

Aza. It cannot slay us : threaten dust with death,
And talk of weapons unto that which bleeds.
What are thy swords in our immortal eyes ?

Raph. The moment cometh to approve thy strength ;
And learn at length
How vain to war with what thy God commands :
Thy former force was in thy faith.

Enter Mortals, flying for refuge.

Chorus of Mortals.

The heavens and earth are mingling — God ! oh God

What have we done? Yet spare!
 Hark! even the forest beasts howl forth their prayer!
 The dragon crawls from out his den,
 To herd, in terror, innocent with men;
 And the birds scream their agony through air.
 Yet, yet, Jehovah! yet withdraw thy rod
 Of wrath, and pity thine own world's despair
 Hear not man only but all nature plead! [clay,
Raph. Farewell, thou earth! ye wretched sons of
 I cannot, must not, aid you. 'Tis decreed!

[*Exit RAPHAEL.*

Japh. Some clouds sweep on as vultures for their
 prey,
 While others, fix'd as rocks, await the word
 At which their wrathful vials shall be pour'd.
 No azure more shall robe the firmament,
 Nor spangled stars be glorious: Death hath risen.
 In the sun's place a pale and ghastly glare
 Hath wound itself around the dying air.¹
Aza. Come, Anah! quit this chaos-founded prison,
 To which the elements again repair,
 To turn it into what it was: beneath
 The shelter of these wings thou shalt be safe,
 As was the eagle's nestling once within
 Its mother's. — Let the coming chaos chafe
 With all its elements! Heed not their din!
 A brighter world than this, where thou shalt breathe
 Ethereal life, will we explore:
 These darken'd clouds are not the only skies.

[*AZAZIEL and SAMIASA fly off, and disappear with
 ANAH and AHOLIBAMAH.*

¹ [In his description of the deluge, which is a varied and recurring master-piece,—(we hear it foretold, and we see it come,)—Lord Byron appears to us to have had an eye to Poussin's celebrated picture, with the sky hanging like a weight of lead upon the waters, the sun quenched and lurid, the rocks and trees upon them gloomily watching their fate, and a few figures struggling vainly with the overwhelming waves.—JEFFREY.]

Japh. They are gone! They have disappear'd amidst
• the roar
Of the forsaken world; and never more,
Whether they live, or die with all earth's life,
Now near its last, can aught restore
Anah unto these eyes. ¹

Chorus of Mortals.

Oh son of Noah! mercy on thy kind!
What! wilt thou leave us all — all — *all* behind?
While safe amidst the elemental strife,
Thou sitt'st within thy guarded ark?

A Mother (offering her infant to JAPHET). Oh let
this child embark!

I brought him forth in woe,

But thought it joy

To see him to my bosom clinging^{so}.

Why was he born?

What hath he done —

My unwear'd son —

To move Jehovah's wrath or scorn?

What is there in this milk of mine, that death

Should stir all heaven and earth up to destroy

My boy,

And roll the waters o'er his placid breath?

Save him, thou seed of Seth!

Or cursed be — with him who made

Thee and thy race, for which we are betray'd!

Japh. Peace! 't is no hour for curses, but for prayer!

Chorus of Mortals.

For prayer!!!

And where

¹ [The despair of the mortal lovers for the loss of their mortal mistresses is well and pathetically expressed. — JEFFREY.]

Shall prayer ascend,
 When the swoln clouds unto the mountains bend
 And burst,
 And gushing oceans every barrier rend,
 Until the very deserts know no thirst?
 Accursed
 Be he who made thee and thy sire!
 We deem our curses vain; we must expire;
 But as we know the worst,
 Why should our hymn be raised, our knees be bent
 Before the implacable Omnipotent,
 Since we must fall the same?
 If he hath made earth, let it be his 'shame,
 To make a world for torture. — Lo! they come,
 The loathsome waters, in their rage!
 And with their roar make wholesome nature dumb!
 The forests' trees (coeval with the hour
 When Paradise upsprung,
 Ere Eve gave Adam knowledge for her dower,
 Or Adam his first hymn of slavery sung),
 So massy, vast, yet green in their old age,
 Are overtopp'd,
 Their summer blossoms by the surges lopp'd,
 Which rise, and rise, and rise.
 Vainly we look up to the lowering skies —
 They meet the seas,
 And shut out God from our beseeching eyes.
 Fly, son of Noah, fly! and take thine ease,
 In thine allotted ocean-tent;
 And view, all floating o'er the element,
 The corpses of the world of thy young days:
 Then to Jehovah raise
 Thy song of praise!
A Mortal. Blessed are the dead
 Who die in the Lord!
 And though the waters be o'er earth outspread,

Yet, as *his* word,
• • Be the decree adored !
He gave me life — he taketh but
The breath which is his own :
And though these eyes should be for ever shut,
Nor longer this weak voice before his throne
Be heard in supplicating tone, -
Still blessed be the Lord,
For what is past,
For that which is :
For all are his,
From first to last —
Time — space — eternity — life — death —
The vast known and immeasurable unknown.
He made, and can unmake ;
And shall *I*, for a little gasp of breath,
BlaspHEME and groan ?
No ; let me die, as I have lived, in faith,
Nor quiver, though the universe may quake !

Chorus of Mortals.

Where shall we fly ?
Not to the mountains high ;
For now their torrents rush, with double roar,
To meet the ocean, which, advancing still,
Already grasps each drowning hill,
Nor leaves an unsearch'd cave.

Enter a Woman.

Woman. Oh, save me, save !
Our valley is no more :
My father and my father's tent,
My brethren and my brethren's herds,
The pleasant trees that o'er our noonday bent,
And sent forth evening songs from sweetest birds,

The little rivulet which freshen'd all
 Our pastures green,
 No more are to be seen.
 When to the mountain cliff I climb'd this morn,
 I turn'd to bless the spot,
 And not a leaf appear'd about to fall ; —
 And now they are not ! —
 Why was I born ?
Japh. To die ! in youth to die !
 And happier in that doom,
 Than to behold the universal tomb,
 Which I
 Am thus condemn'd to weep above in vain.
 Why, when all perish, why must I remain ? ¹

[*The waters rise : Men fly in every direction ; many
 are overtaken by the waves ; the Chorus of Mortals
 disperses in search of safety up the mountains :
 Japhet remains upon a rock, while the Ark floats
 towards him in the distance.*

¹ [This poem carries with it the peculiar impress of the writer's genius. It displays great vigour, and even a severity of style, throughout ; which is another proof, if proof were needed, that elevation of writing is to be obtained only by a rigid regard to simplicity. It may be perused without shocking the feelings of the sensitive, or furnishing an object for the discriminating morality of the Lord Chancellor. Lord Byron has evidently endeavoured to sustain the interest of this poem, by depicting natural but deep drawn thoughts, in all their freshness and intensity, with as little fictitious aid as possible. Nothing is circumlocutory : there is no going about and about to enter at length upon his object, but he impetuously rushes into it at once. All over the poem there is a gloom cast suitable to the subject : an ominous fearful hue, like that which Poussin has flung over his inimitable picture of the Deluge. We see much evil, but we dread more. All is out of earthly keeping, as the events of the time are out of the course of nature. Man's wickedness, the perturbed creation, fear-struck mortals, demons passing to and fro in the earth, an overshadowing solemnity, and unearthly loves, form together the materials. That it has faults is obvious : prosaic passages, and too much tedious soliloquising : but there is the vigour and force of Byron to fling into the scale against these : there is much of the sublime in description, and the beautiful in poetry. Prejudice, or

ignorance, or both, may condemn it: but, while true poetical feeling exists amongst us, it will be pronounced not unworthy of its distinguished author. — CAMPBELL.

It appears that this is but the first part of a poem; but it is likewise a poem, and a fine one too, within itself. We confess that we see little or nothing objectionable in it, either as to theological orthodoxy, or general human feeling. It is solemn, lofty, fearful, wild, tumultuous, and shadowed all over with the darkness of a dreadful disaster. Of the angels who love the daughters of men we see little, and know less — and not too much of the love and passion of the fair lost mortals. The inconsolable despair preceding and accompanying an incomprehensible catastrophe, pervades the whole composition; and its expression is made sublime by the noble strain of poetry in which it is said or sung. — WILSON.

This "Mystery," with whatever crudeness and defects it is chargeable, certainly has more poetry and music in it than any of Lord Byron's dramatic writings since "Manfred;" and has also the peculiar merit of throwing us back, in a great degree, to the strange and preternatural time of which it professes to treat. It is truly, and in every sense of the word, a meeting of "Heaven and Earth;" angels are seen ascending and descending, and the windows of the sky are opened to deluge the face of nature. We have an impassioned picture of the strong and devoted attachment inspired into the daughters of men by angel forms, and have placed before us the emphatic picture of "woman wailing for her demon lover." There is a like conflict of the passions as of the elements — all wild, chaotic, uncontrollable, fatal; but there is a discordant harmony in all this — a keeping in the colouring and the time. In handling the unpolished page, we look upon the world before the Flood, and gaze upon a doubtful blank, with only a few straggling figures, part human and part divine; while, in the expression of the former, we read the fancies, ethereal and lawless, that lifted the eye of beauty to the skies, and in the latter, the human passions that "drew angels down to earth." — JEFFREY.

Among all the wonderful excellences of Milton, nothing surpasses the pure and undisturbed idealism with which he has drawn our first parents, so completely human as to excite our most ardent sympathies, yet so far distinct from the common race of men as manifestly to belong to a higher and uncorrupted state of being. In like manner, his Paradise is formed of the universal productions of nature — the flowers, the fruits, the trees, the waters, the cool breezes, the soft and sunny slopes, the majestic hills that skirt the scene; yet the whole is of an earlier, a more prolific, a more luxuriant vegetation: it fully comes up to our notion of what the earth might have been before it was "cursed of its Creator." This is the more remarkable, as Milton himself sometimes destroys, or at least mars, the general effect of his picture, by the introduction of incongruous thoughts or images. The poet's pas-

sions are, on occasions, too strong for his imagination, drag him down to earth, and, for the sake of some ill-timed allusion to some of those circumstances, which had taken possession of his mighty mind, he runs the hazard of breaking the solemn enchantment with which he has spell-bound our captive senses. Perhaps, of later writers, Lord Byron alone has caught the true tone, in his short drama called "Heaven and Earth." Here, notwithstanding that we cannot but admit the great and manifold delinquencies against correct taste, particularly some perfectly ludicrous metrical whimsies, yet all is in keeping—all is strange, poetic, oriental; the lyric abruptness, the prodigal accumulation of images in one part, and the rude simplicity in others—above all, the general tone of description as to natural objects, and of language and feeling in the scarcely mortal beings which come forth upon the scene, seem to throw us upward into the age of men before their lives were shortened to the narrow span of three score years and ten, and when all that walked the earth were not born of woman.—MILMAN.

From the "Loves of the Angels," we turn to a "strain of higher mood;" with feelings much like those which would arise on leaving the contemplation of a "Holy Family" by Carlo Dolce, to behold the "Last Judgment" of Michael Angelo. The Mystery of "Heaven and Earth" is conceived in the best style of the greatest masters of poetry and painting. It is not unworthy of Dante, and of the mighty artist to whom we have alluded. As a picture of the last deluge, it is incomparably grand and awful. The characters, too, are invested with great dignity and grace. Nothing can be more imposing and fascinating than the haughty, and imperious, and passionate beauty of the daughter of Cain, nor any thing more venerable than the mild but inflexible dignity of the patriarch Noah. We trust that no one will be found with feelings so obtuse, as to be insensible to the beauties of this picture.

W E R N E R :

A Tragedy.

BY

LORD BYRON.

LONDON:

MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

SOLD ALSO BY

LT AND BOGUE, FLEET STREET.

, OLIVER AND BOYD: DUBLIN, JOHN CUMMING.

1842.

. LONDON :
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.



WERNER;

OR,

THE INIFRITANCE;

A TRAGEDY ¹

¹ [The tragedy of "Werner" was begun at Pisa, December 18th, 1821, completed January 20th, 1822, and published in London in the November following. The reviews of it were, without exception, unfavourable. One critique of the time thus opens:—

"Who could be so absurd as to think, that a dramatist has no right to make free with other people's fables? On the contrary, we are quite aware that that particular species of genius which is exhibited in the construction of plots, never at any period flourished in England. We all know that Shakspeare himself took his stories from Italian novels, Danish sages, English chronicles, Plutarch's Lives—from any where rather than from his own invention. But did he take *the whole* of Hamlet, or Juliet, or Richard the Third, or Antony and Cleopatra, from *any* of these foreign sources? Did he not *invent*, in the noblest sense of the word, all the *characters* of his pieces? Who dreams that any old Italian novelist, or ballad-maker, could have formed the imagination of such a creature as Juliet? Who dreams that the HAMLET of Shakspeare, the princely enthusiast, the melancholy philosopher, that spirit refined even to pain, the most incomprehensible and unapproachable of all the creations of human genius, is the same being, in any thing but the name, with the rough, strong-hearted,

A ?

bloody-handed AMLETI of the north? Who is there that supposes Goethe to have taken the character of *his* Faust from the nursery rhymes and penny pamphlets about the Devil and Doctor Faustus? Or who, to come nearer home, imagines that Lord Byron himself found *his* Sardanapalus in Dionysius of Halicarnassus?

"But *here* Lord Byron has *invented* nothing—absolutely NOTHING. There is not one incident in his play, not even the most trivial, that is not to be found in Miss Lee's novel, occurring exactly in the same manner, brought about by exactly the same agents, and producing exactly the same effects of the plot. And then as to the characters,—not only is every one of them to be found in 'Kruitzner,' but every one is to be found there more fully and powerfully developed. Indeed, but for the preparation which we had received from our old familiarity with Miss Lee's own admirable work, we rather incline to think that we should have been unable to comprehend the gist of her noble imitator, or rather copier, in several of what seem to be meant for his most elaborate delineations. The fact is, that this undeviating closeness, this humble fidelity of *imitation*, is a thing so perfectly new in any thing worthy of the name of *literature*, that we are sure no one, who has not read the *Cantebury Tales*, will be able to form the least conception of what it amounts to.

"Those who have never read Miss Lee's book, will, however, be pleased with this production; for, in truth, the story is one of the most powerfully conceived, one of the most picturesque, and at the same time instructive stories, that we are acquainted with. 'Kruitzner, or the German's Tale,' possesses mystery, and yet clearness, as to its structure; strength of characters, and admirable contrast of characters; and, above all, the most lively interest, blended with and subservient to the most affecting of moral lessons."

The reader will find a minute analysis, introduced by the above remarks, in Blackwood, vol. xli. p. 710.]

PREFACE.

THE following drama is taken entirely from the "*German's Tale, Krutzner*," published many years ago in *Lee's Canterbury Tales*; written (I believe) by two sisters, of whom one furnished only this story and another, both of which are considered superior to the remainder of the collection.¹ I have adopted the characters, plan, and even the language, of many parts of this story. Some of the characters are modified or altered, a few of the names changed, and one character (Ida of Stralenheim) added by myself: but in the rest the original is chiefly followed. When I was young (about fourteen, I think,) I first read this tale, which made a deep impression upon me; and may, indeed, be said to contain the germ of much that I have since written. I am not sure that it ever was very popular; or, at any rate, its popularity has since been eclipsed by that of other great writers in the same department. But I have generally found that those who *had* read it, agreed with me in their estimate of the singular power of mind

¹ [This is not correct. "The Young Lady's Tale, or the Two Emilys," and "the Clergyman's Tale, or Pembroke," were contributed by Sophia Lee, the author of "The Recess," the comedy of "The Chapter of Accidents," and "Almeyda, a Tragedy," who died in 1824. The "German's Tale," and all the others in the *Canterbury Collection*, were written by Harriet, the younger of the sisters.]

and conception which it develops. I should also add *conception*, rather than execution ; for the story might, perhaps, have been developed with greater advantage. Amongst those whose opinions agreed with mine upon this story, I could mention some very high names : but it is not necessary, nor indeed of any use ; for every one must judge according to his own feelings. I merely refer the reader to the original story, that he may see to what extent I have borrowed from it ; and am not unwilling that he should find much greater pleasure in perusing it than the drama which is founded upon its contents.

I had begun a drama upon this tale so far back as 1815, (the first I ever attempted, except one at thirteen years old, called "*Ulric and Ilvina*," which I had sense enough to burn,) and had nearly completed an act, when I was interrupted by circumstances. This is somewhere amongst my papers in England ; but as it has not been found, I have re-written the first, and added the subsequent acts.

The whole is neither intended, nor in any shape adapted, for the stage.¹

Pisa, February, 1822.

¹ [Werner is, however, the only one of Lord Byron's dramas that proved successful in representation. It is still (1836) in possession of the stage.]

TO
THE ILLUSTRIOUS GOETHE,
BY ONE OF HIS HUMBLEST ADMIRERS,
THIS TRAGEDY
IS DEDICATED.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Men. — WERNER.
 ULRIC.
 STRALENHEIM.
 IDENSTEIN.
 GABOR.
 FRITZ.
 HENRICK.
 ERIC.
 ARNHEIM.
 MEISTER.
 RODOLPH.
 LUDWIG.

Women. — JOSEPHINE.
 IDA STRALENHEIM.

Scene— Partly on the Frontier of Silesia, and partly in
 Siegendorf Castle, near Prague.

Time — the Close of the *Thirty Years' War*.

WERNER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Hall of a decayed Palace near a small Town on the Northern Frontier of Silesia — the Night tempestuous.

WERNER¹ and JOSEPHINE his wife.

Jos. MY love, be calmer !

Wer.

I am calm.

Jos.

To me —

Yes, but not to thyself: thy pace is hurried,
And no one walks a chamber like to ours
With steps like thine when his heart is at rest.
Were it a garden, I should deem thee happy,

¹ [Werner — we mean Krutzner — is admirably drawn. Who does not recognise in him the portrait of too common a character? The man of shining talent, ardent mind, powerful connections, brilliant prospects, who, after squandering away all in wanton self-indulgence, having lived only for himself, finds himself bankrupt in fortune and character, the prey of bitter regret, yet, unrepentant, as selfish in remorse as in his gaiety. All that is inconsistent in the character of Krutzner is rendered still more so in the Werner of the drama.— ECL. REV.]

And stepping with the bee from flower to flower ;
But *here !*

Wer. 'T is chill ; the tapestry lets through
The wind to which it waves : my blood is frozen.

Jos. Ah, no !

Wer. (smiling). Why ! wouldst thou have it so ?

Jos. I would
Have it a healthful current.

Wer. Let it flow
Until 't is spilt or check'd — how soon, I care not.

Jos. And am I nothing in thy heart ?

Wer. All — all.

Jos. Then canst thou wish for that which must break
mine ?

Wer. (approaching her slowly). But for *thee* I had
been — no matter what,

But much of good and evil ; what I am,
Thou knowest ; what I might or should have been,
Thou knowest not : but still I love thee, nor
Shall aught divide us.

[*WERNER walks on abruptly, and then approaches*
JOSEPHINE.

The storm of the night,
Perhaps affects me ; I 'm a thing of feelings,
And have of late been sickly, as, alas !
'Thou know'st by sufferings more than mine, my love !
In watching me.

Jos. To see thee well is much —
To see thee happy —

Wer. Where hast thou seen such ?
Let me be wretched with the rest !

Jos. But think
How many in this hour of tempest shiver
Beneath the biting wind and heavy rain,
Whose every drop bows them down nearer earth,

Which hath no chamber for them save beneath
Her surface.

Wer. And that's not the worst : who cares
For chambers ? rest is all. The wretches whom
Thou namest — ay, the wind howls round them, and
The dull and dropping rain saps in their bones
The creeping marrow. I have been a soldier,
A hunter, and a traveller, and am
A beggar, and should know the thing thou talk'st of.

Jos. And art thou not now shelter'd from them all ?

Wer. Yes. And from these alone.

Jos. And that is something

Wer. True — to a peasant.

Jos. Should the nobly born
Be thankless for that refuge which their habits
Of early delicacy render more
Needful than to the peasant, when the ebb
Of fortune leaves them on the shoals of life ?

Wer. It is not that, thou know'st it is not — we
Have borne all this, I'll not say patiently,
Except in thee — but we have borne it.

Jos. Well ?

Wer. Something beyond our outward sufferings
(though

These were enough to gnaw into our souls)
Hath stung me oft, and, more than ever, *now*.
When, but for this untoward sickness, which
Seized me upon this desolate frontier, and¹
Hath wasted, not alone my strength, but means,

¹ [In this play, Lord Byron adopts the same nerveless and pointless kind of blank verse, which was a sorrow to every body in his former dramatic essays. It is, indeed, "most unmusical, most melancholy." — "Ofs," "tos," "ands," "fors," "bys," "buts," and the like, are the most common conclusions of a line ; there is no ease, no flow, no harmony, "in linked sweetness long drawn out : " neither is there any thing of abrupt fiery vigour to compensate for these defects. — BLACKWOOD.]

And leaves us — no ! this is beyond me ! — but
 For this I had been happy ¹ — *thou* been happy —
 The splendour of my rank sustain'd — my name —
 My father's name — been still upheld ; and, more
 Than those —

Jos. (abruptly). My son — our son — our Ulric,
 Been clasp'd again in these long-empty arms,
 And all a mother's hunger satisfied.
 Twelve years ! he was but eight then : — beautiful
 He was, and beautiful he must be now,
 My Ulric ! my adored !

Wer. I have been full oft
 The chase of Fortune ; now she hath o'ertaken
 My spirit where it cannot turn at bay, —
 Sick, poor, and lonely.

Jos. Lonely ! my dear husband ?

¹ [In this drama there is absolutely no poetry to be found ; and if the measure of verse which is here dealt to us be a sample of what we are to expect for the future, we have only to intreat that Lord Byron will drop the ceremony of cutting up his prose into lines of ten, eleven, or twelve syllables (for he is not very punctilious on this head), and favour us with it in its natural state. It requires no very cunning alchemy to transmute his verse into prose, nor, reversing the experiment, to convert his plain sentences into verses like his own. — “ When,” says Werner, “ but for this untoward sickness, which seized me upon this desolate frontier, and hath wasted, not alone my strength, but means, and leaves us — no ; this is beyond me ! but for this I had been happy.” — This is, indeed, beyond us. If this be poetry, then we were wrong in taking his Lordship's preface for prose. It will run on ten feet as well as the rest —

“ Some of the characters are modified
 Or altered, a few of the names changed, and
 One character (Ida of Stralenheim)
 Added by myself ; but in the rest the
 Original is chiefly followed. When
 I was young (about fourteen I think) I
 First read this tale, which made a deep impression
 Upon me.” —

Nor is there a line in these so lame and halting, but we could point out many in the drama as bad. — CAMPBELL.]

Wer. Or worse — involving all I love, in this
Far worse than solitude. *Alone*, I had died,
And all been over in a nameless grave.

Jos. And I had not outlived thee ; but pray take
Comfort ! We have struggled long ; and they who
strive

With Fortune win or weary her at last,
So that they find the goal or cease to feel
Further. Take comfort, — we shall find our boy.

Wer. We were in sight of him, of every thing
Which could bring compensation for past sorrow —
And to be baffled thus !

Jos. • We are not baffled.

Wer. Are we not penniless ?

Jos. We ne'er were wealthy.

Wer. But I was born to wealth, and rank, and
power ;

Enjoy'd them, loved them, and, alas ! abused them,
And forfeited them by my father's wrath,
In my o'er-fervent youth : but for the abuse
Long sufferings have atoned. My father's death
Left the path open, yet not without snares.
This cold and creeping kinsman, who so long
Kept his eye on me, as the snake upon
The fluttering bird, hath ere this time outstept me,
Become the master of my rights, and lord
Of that which lifts him up to princes in
Dominion and domain.

Jos. Who knows ? our son
May have return'd back to his grandsire, and
Even now uphold thy rights for thee ?

Wer. 'Tis hopeless.
Since his strange disappearance from my father's,
Entailing, as it were, my sins upon
Himself, no tidings have reveal'd his course.
I parted with him to his grandsire, on

The promise that his anger would stop short
Of the third generation ; but Heaven seems
To claim her stern prerogative, and visit
Upon my boy his father's faults and follies.

Jos. I must hope better still, — at least we have yet
Baffled the long pursuit of Stralenheim.

Wer. We should have done, but for this fatal sick-
ness ;

More fatal than a mortal malady,
Because it takes not life, but life's sole solace :
Even now I feel my spirit girt about
By the snares of this avaricious fiend : —
How do I know he hath not track'd us here ?

Jos. He does not know thy person ; and his spies,
Who so long watch'd thee, have been left at Ham-
burgh.

Our unexpected journey, and this change
Of name, leaves all discovery far behind :
None hold us here for aught save what we seem.

Wer. Save what we seem ! save what we are — sick
beggars,

Even to our very hopes. — Ha ! ha !

Jos.

Alas !

That bitter laugh !

Wer.

Who would read in this form

The high soul of the son of a long line ?

Who, in this garb, the heir of princely lands ?

Who, in this sunken, sickly eye, the pride

Of rank and ancestry ? In this worn cheek

And famine-hollow'd brow, the lord of halls

Which daily feast a thousand vassals ?

Jos.

You

Ponder'd not thus upon these worldly things,

My Werner ! when you deign'd to choose for bride

The foreign daughter of a wandering exile.

Wer. An exile's daughter with an outcast son

WERG. Fit marriage: but I still had hopes
To lift thee to the state we both were born for.
Your father's house was noble, though decay'd;
And worthy by its birth to match with ours.

Jos. Your father did not think so, though 't was
noble;
But had my birth been all my claim to match
With thee, I should have deem'd it what it is.

Wer. And what is that in thine eyes?

Jos. All which it
Has done in our behalf, — nothing.

Wer. How, — nothing?

Jos. Or worse; for it has been a canker in
Thy heart from the beginning: but for this,
We had not felt our poverty but as
Millions of myriads feel it, cheerfully;
But for these phantoms of thy feudal fathers,
Thou mightst have earn'd thy bread, as thousands
earn it;

Or, if that seem too humble, tried by commerce,
Or other civic means, to amend thy fortunes.

Wer. (*ironically*). And been an Hanseatic burgher?
Excellent!

Jos. Whate'er thou mightst have been, to me thou
art
What no state high or low can ever change,
My heart's first choice; — which chose thee, knowing
neither
Thy birth, thy hopes, thy pride; nought, save thy
sorrows:

While they last, let me comfort or divide them:
When they end, let mine end with them, or thee!¹

¹ [Werner's wife, Josephine, with the exception of Ida, the only female in the drama, is an example of true and spotless virtue. A true woman, she not only well maintains the character of her sex by general integrity, but equally displays the endearing, soft, and

Wer. My better angel! Such I have ever found thee;

This rashness, or this weakness of my temper,
Ne'er raised a thought to injure thee or thine.
Thou didst not mar my fortunes: my own nature
In youth was such as to unmake an empire,
Had such been my inheritance; but now,
Chasten'd, subdued, out-worn, and taught to know
Myself, — to lose this for our son and thee!
Trust me, when, in my two-and-twentieth spring,
My father barr'd me from my father's house,
The last sole scion of a thousand sires
(For I was then the last), it hurt me less
Than to behold my boy and my boy's mother
Excluded in their innocence from what
My faults deserved — exclusion; although then
My passions were all living serpents, and
Twined like the gorgon's round me.

[*A loud knocking is heard.*

Jos.

Hark!

Wer.

A knocking!

Jos. Who can it be at this lone hour? We have
Few visitors.

Wer. And poverty hath none,
Save those who come to make it poorer still.
Well, I am prepared.

[*WERNER puts his hand into his bosom, as if to
search for some weapon.*

Jos.

Oh! do not look so. I

Will to the door. It cannot be of import

unshaken affection of a wife; cherishing and comforting a suffering husband throughout all the adversities of his fate, and all the errors of his own conduct. She is a native of Italy, and thus contrasts the beauties and circumstances of her own country with those of the frontiers of Sillesia, where an instance of petty feudal tyranny has just excited her feelings. — M. REV.]

In this lone spot of wintry desolation : —
The very desert saves man from mankind.

[*She goes to the door.*]

*Enter IDENSTEIN.*¹

Iden. A fair good evening to my fairer hostess
And worthy — What's your name, my friend?

Wer.

Are you

Not afraid to demand it?

Iden.

Not afraid?

Egad! I am afraid. You look as if
I ask'd for something better than your name,
By the face you put on it.

Wer.

Better, sir!

Iden. Better or worse, like matrimony: what
Shall I say more? You have been a guest this month
Here in the prince's palace — (to be sure,
His highness had resign'd it to the ghosts
And rats these twelve years — but 't is still a palace) —
I say you have been our lodger, and as yet
We do not know your name.

Wer.

My name is Werner.

Iden. A goodly name, a very worthy name,
As e'er was gilt upon a trader's board:
I have a cousin in the lazaretto
Of Hamburgh, who has got a wife who bore
The same. He is an officer of trust,
Surgeon's assistant (hoping to be surgeon),
And has done miracles i' the way of business.
Perhaps you are related to my relative?

Wer. To yours?

Jos.

Oh, yes; we are, but distantly.

¹ [The most amusing fellow in the drama is Monsieur Idenstein; who makes the finest speech, too, beyond comparison, of any of the personages. The only wonder is, where he got it. — ECL. REV.]

(*Aside to WERNER.*) Cannot you humour the dull
gossip till

We learn his purpose?

Iden.

Well, I'm glad of that ;

I thought so all along, such natural yearnings
Play'd round my heart : — blood is not water, cousin ;
And so let's have some wine, and drink unto
Our better acquaintance : relatives should be
Friends.

Wer. You appear to have drank enough already ;
And if you have not, I've no wine to offer,
Else it were yours : but this you know, or should
know :

You see I am poor, and sick, and will not see
That I would be alone ; but to your business !
What brings you here ?

Iden.

Why, what should bring me here ?

Wer. I know not, though I think that I could guess
That which will send you hence.

Jos. (aside).

Patience, dear Werner !

Iden. You don't know what has happen'd, then ?

Jos.

How should we ?

Iden. The river has o'erflow'd.

Jos.

Alas ! we have known

That to our sorrow for these five days ; since
It keeps us here.

Iden.

But what you don't know is,
That a great personage, who fain would cross
Against the stream and three postilions' wishes,
Is drown'd below the ford, with five post-horses,
A monkey, and a mastiff, and a valet.

Jos. Poor creatures ! are you sure ?

Iden.

Yes, of the monkey,

And the valet, and the cattle ; but as yet
We know not if his excellency's dead
Or no ; you noblemen are hard to drown,

As it is fit that men in office should be ;
But what is certain is, that he has swallow'd
Enough of the Oder to have burst two peasants ;
And now a Saxon and Hungarian traveller,
Who, at their proper peril, snatch'd him from
The whirling river, have sent on to crave
A lodging, or a grave, according as
It may turn out with the live or dead body.

Jos. And where will you receive him? here, I hope,
If we can be of service — say the word.

Idem. Here? no; but in the prince's own apartment.

As fits a noble guest : — 't is damp, no doubt,
Not having been inhabited these twelve years ;
But then he comes from a much damper place,
So scarcely will catch cold in 't, if he be
Still liable to cold — and if not, why
He 'll be worse lodged to-morrow : ne'ertheless,
I have order'd fire and all appliances
To be got ready for the worst — that is,
In case he should survive.

Jos. • Poor gentleman,
I hope he will, with all my heart.

Wer. Intendant,
Have you not learn'd his name? (*Aside to his wife.*) My
Josephine,

Retire: I'll sift this fool. [Exit JOSEPHINE.

Iden. His name? oh Lord!

Who knows if he hath now a name or no?
'T is time enough to ask it when he's able
To give an answer; or if not, to put
His heir's upon his epitaph. Methought
Just now you chid me for demanding names?

Wer. True, true, I did so: you say well and wisely.

*Enter GABOR.*¹

Gab. If I intrude, I crave —

Iden. Oh, no intrusion !

This is the palace ; this a stranger like
Yourself ; I pray you make yourself at home :
But where 's his excellency ? and how fares he ?

Gab. Wetly and wearily, but out of peril :
He paused to change his garments in a cottage,
(Where I doff'd mine for these, and came on hither)
And has almost recover'd from his drenching.
He will be here anon.

Iden. What ho, there ! bustle !

Without there, Herman, Weilburg, Peter, Conrad !

[*Gives directions to different servants who enter.*]

A nobleman sleeps here to-night — see that
All is in order in the damask chamber —
Keep up the stove — I will myself to the cellar —
And Madame Idenstein (my consort, stranger,)
Shall furnish forth the bed-apparel ; for,
To say the truth, they are marvellous scant of this
Within the palace precincts, since h's highness
Left it some dozen years ago. And then
His excellency will sup, doubtless ?

Gab. Faith !

I cannot tell ; but I should think the pillow
Would please him better than the table, after
His soaking in your river : but for fear
Your viands should be thrown away, I mean

¹ [Some faults the poem has only in common with the original. Gabor is a most inexplicable personage : he is always on the point of turning out something more than he proves to be. A sort of mysterious horror is thrown around his impalpability, in the tale ; but in the drama, he is only a sentimental, moody, high-mettled soldier of fortune, whose appearances and disappearances are alike singularly inopportune, and who ends in a mere mercenary. His character is, we think, decidedly a failure. — ECL. REV.]

To sup myself, and have a friend without
Who will do honour to your good cheer w
A traveller's appetite.

Iden. But are you sure
His excellency — But his name : what is it ?

Gab. I do not know.

Iden. And yet you saved his life.

Gab. I help'd my friend to do so.

Iden. Well, that's strange,
To save a man's life whom you do not know.

Gab. Not so ; for there are some I know so well,
I scarce should give myself the trouble.

Iden. Pray,
Good friend, and who may you be ?

Gab. By my family,
Hungarian.

Iden. Which is call'd ?

Gab. It matters little.

Iden. (*aside*). I think that all the world are grown
anonymous,

Since no one cares to tell me what he's call'd !

Pray, has his excellency a large suite ?

Gab. Sufficient.

Iden. How many ?

Gab. I did not count them.

We came up by mere accident, and just

In time to drag him through his carriage window.

Iden. Well, what would I give to save a great man !

No doubt you'll have a swinging sum as recompense.

Gab. Perhaps.

Iden. Now, how much do you reckon on ?

Gab. I have not yet put up myself to sale :

In the mean time, my best reward would be

A glass of your Hockheimer — a *green* glass,

Wreath'd with rich grapes and Bacchanal devices.

O'erflowing with the oldest of your vintage :

For which I promise you, in case you e'er
 Run hazard of being drown'd, (although I own
 It seems, of all deaths, the least likely for you,)
 I'll pull you out for nothing. Quick, my friend,
 And think, for every bumper I shall quaff,
 A wave the less may roll above your head.

Iden. (aside). I don't much like this fellow — close
 and dry

He seems, — two things which suit me not ; however,
 Wine he shall have ; if that unlocks him not,
 I shall not sleep to-night for curiosity.

{ *Exit IDENSTEIN.*

Gab. (to WERNER). This master of the ceremonies is

The intendant of the palace, I presume :
 'T is a fine building, but decay'd.

Wer.

The apartment

Design'd for him you rescued will be found
 In fitter order for a sickly guest.

Gab. I wonder then you occupied it not,
 For you seem delicate in health,

Wer. (quickly).

Sir !

Gab.

Pray

Excuse me : have I said aught to offend you ?

Wer. Nothing : but we are strangers to each other.

Gab. And that's the reason I would have us less so :
 I thought our bustling guest without had said
 You were a chance and passing guest, the counterpart
 Of me and my companions.

Wer.

Very true.

Gab. Then, as we never met before, and never,
 It may be, may again encounter, why,
 I thought to cheer up this old dungeon here
 (At least to me) by asking you to share
 The fare of my companions and myself.

• *Wer.* Pray, pardon me ; my health —

Gab. • Even as you please.
I have been a soldier, and perhaps am blunt
In bearing.

Wer. I have also served, and can
Requite a soldier's greeting.

Gab. In what service?
The Imperial?

Wer. (*quickly, and then interrupting himself*). I com-
manded — no — I mean
I served; but it is many years ago,
When first Bohemia raised her banner 'gainst
The Austrian. •

Gab. Well, that's over now, and peace
Has turn'd some thousand gallant hearts adrift
To live as they best may: and, to say truth,
Some take the shortest.

Wer. What is that?

Gab. Whate'er
They lay their hands on. All Silesia and
Lusatia's woods are tenanted by bands
Of the late troops, who levy on the country
Their maintenance: the Chatelains must keep
Their castle walls — beyond them 't is but doubtful
Travel for your rich count or full-blown baron.
My comfort is that, wander where I may,
I've little left to lose now.

Wer. And I — nothing.

Gab. That's harder still. You say you were a
soldier.

Wer. I was.

Gab. You look one still. All soldiers are
Or should be comrades, even though enemies.
Our swords when drawn must cross, our engines aim
(While levell'd) at each other's hearts; but when
A truce, a peace, or what you will, remits
The steel into its scabbard, and lets sleep

The spark which lights the matchlock, we are brethren.
 You are poor and sickly — I am not rich but healthy ;
 I want for nothing which I cannot want ;
 You seem devoid of this — wilt share it ?

[GABOR pulls out his purse.

Wer.

Who

Told you I was a beggar ?

Gab.

You yourself,

In saying you were a soldier during peace-time.

Wer. (*looking at him with suspicion*). You know me not ?

Gab.

I know no man, not even

Myself: how should I then know one I ne'er

Beheld till half an hour since ?

Wer.

Sir, I thank you.

Your offer's noble were it to a friend,

And not unkind as to an unknown stranger,

Though scarcely prudent ; but no less I thank you.

I am a beggar in all save his trade ;

And when I beg of any one, it shall be

Of him who was the first to offer what

Few can obtain by asking. Pardon me. [Exit WER.

Gab. (*solus*). A goodly fellow by his looks, though worn,

As most good fellows are, by pain or pleasure,

Which tear life out of us before our time ;

I scarce know which most quickly: but he seems

To have seen better days, as who has not

Who has seen yesterday ? — But here approaches

Our sage intendant, with the wine: however,

For the cup's sake I'll bear the cupbearer.

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Iden. 'Tis here! the supernaculum! twenty years
 Of age, if 'tis a day.

Gab.

Which epoch makes

Young women and old wine ; and 't is great pity,
Of two such excellent things, increase of years,
Which still improves the one, should spoil the other.
Fill full — Here 's to our hostess ! — your fair wife !

[*Takes the glass.*

Iden. Fair ! — Well, I trust your taste in wine is
equal

To that you show for beauty ; but I pledge you
Nevertheless.

Gab. Is not the lovely woman
I met in the adjacent hall, who, with
An air, and port, and eye, which would have better
Besecm'd this palace in its brightest days
(Though in a garb adapted to its present
Abandonment), return'd my salutation —
Is not the same your spouse ?

Iden. I would she were !
But you're mistaken : — that 's the stranger's wife.

Gab. And by her aspect she might be a prince's ;
Though time hath touch'd her too, she still retains
Much beauty, and more majesty.

Iden. And that
Is more than I can say for Madame Idenstein,
At least in beauty : as for majesty,
She has some of its properties which might
Be spared — but never mind !

Gab. I don't. But who
May be this stranger ? He too hath a bearing
Above his outward fortunes.

Iden. There I differ.
He's poor as Job, and not so patient ; but
Who he may be, or what, or aught of him,
Except his name (and that I only learn'd
To-night), I know not.

Gab. But how came he here ?

Iden. In a most miserable old caleche,

About a month since, and immediately
Fell sick, almost to death. He should have died.

Gab. Tender and true ! — but why ?

Iden. Why, what is life

Without a living ? He has not a stiver.

Gab. In that case, I much wonder that a person
Of your apparent prudence should admit
Guests so forlorn into this noble mansion.

Iden. That 's true : but pity, as you know, *does* make
One's heart commit these follies ; and besides,
They had some valuables left at that time,
Which paid their way up to the present hour ;
And so I thought they might as well be lodged
Here as at the small tavern, and I gave them
The run of some of the oldest palace rooms.
They served to air them, at the least as long
As they could pay for firewood.

Gab. Poor souls !

Iden. Ay,

Exceeding poor.

Gab. And yet unused to poverty,
If I mistake not. Whither were they going ?

Iden. Oh ! Heaven knows where, unless to heaven
itself.

Some days ago that look'd the likeliest journey
For Werner.

Gab. Werner ! I have heard the name :
But it may be a feign'd one.

Iden. Like enough
But hark ! a noise of wheels and voices, and
A blaze of torches from without. As sure
As destiny, his excellency 's come.
I must be at my post ; will you not join me,
To help him from his carriage, and present
Your humble duty at the door ?

Gab. I dragg'd him
From out that carriage when he would have given
His barony or county to repel
The rushing river from his gurgling throat.
He has valets now enough: they stood aloof then,
Shaking their dripping ears upon the shore,
All roaring "Help!" but offering none; and as
For *duty* (as you call it) — I did mine *then*,
Now do *yours*. Hence, and bow and cringe him
here!

Iden. I cringe! — but I shall lose the opportunity —
Plague take it! he'll be *here*, and I *not there*!

[*Exit IDENSTEIN hastily.*]

Re-enter WERNER.

Wer. (to himself). I heard a noise of wheels and
voices. How
All sounds now jar me!
Still here! Is he not [Perceiving GABOR.
A spy of my pursuer's? His frank offer
So suddenly, and to a stranger, wore
The aspect of a secret enemy;
For friends are slow at such.

Gab. Sir, you seem rapt;
And yet the time is not akin to thought.
'These old walls will be noisy soon. The baron,
Or count (or whatsoe'er this half drown'd noble
May be), for whom this desolate village and
Its lone inhabitants show more respect
Than did the elements, is come.

Iden. (without). This way —
This way, your excellency: — have a care,
The staircase is a little gloomy, and
Somewhat decay'd; but if we had expected
So high a guest — Pray take my arm, my lord!

Enter STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, and Attendants—partly his own, and partly Retainers of the Domain of which IDENSTEIN is Intendant.

Stral. I'll rest me here a moment.

Iden. (to the servants).

Ho ! a chair !

Instantly knaves !

[*STRALENHEIM sits down.*]

Wer. (aside).

'T is he !

Stral.

I'm better now.

Who are these strangers ?

Iden.

Please you, my good lord,

One says he is no stranger.

Wer. (aloud and hastily). Who says that ?

[*They look at him with surprise.*]

Iden. Why, no one spoke of you, or to you ! — but

Here 's one his excellency may be pleased

To recognise.

[*Pointing to GABOR.*]

Gab.

"I seek not to disturb

His noble memory.

Stral.

I apprehend

This is one of the strangers to whose aid

I owe my rescue. Is not that the other ?

" [*Pointing to WERNER.*]

My state when I was succour'd must excuse

My uncertainty to whom I owe so much.

Iden. He ! — no, my lord ! he rather wants for rescue

Than can afford it. 'T is a poor sick man,

Travel-tired, and lately risen from a bed

From whence he never dream'd to rise.

Stral.

Methought

That there were two.

Gab.

There were, in company ;

But, in the service render'd to your lordship,

I needs must say but *one*, and he is absent.

The chief part of whatever aid was render'd

Was *his* : it was his fortune to be first.

My will was not inferior, but his strength

And youth outstripp'd me; therefore do not waste
Your thanks on me. I was but a glad second
Unto a nobler principal.

Stral. Where is he?

An Atten. My lord, he tarried in the cottage where
Your excellency rested for an hour,
And said he would be here to-morrow.

Stral. Till
That hour arrives, I can but offer thanks,
And then —

Gab. I seek no more, and scarce deserve
So much. My comrade may speak for himself.

Stral. (*fixing his eyes upon WERNER: then aside*).
It cannot be! and yet he must be look'd to.

'T is twenty years since I beheld him with
These eyes; and, though my agents still have kept
Theirs on him, policy has held aloof •
My own from his, not to alarm him into
Suspicion of my plan. Why did I leave
At Hamburg those who would have made assurance
If this be he or no? I thought, ere now,
To have been lord of Siëgendorf, and parted
In haste, though even the elements appear
To fight against me, and this sudden flood
May keep me prisoner here till —

[*He pauses and looks at WERNER; then resumes.*

This man must

Be watch'd. If it is he, he is so changed,
His father, rising from his grave again,
Would pass him by unknown. I must be wary:
An error would spoil all.

Iden. Your lordship seems
Pensive. Will it not please you to pass on?

Stral. 'T is past fatigue which gives my weigh'd-down
spirit

An outward show of thought. I will to rest.

Iden. The prince's chamber is prepared, with all
The very furniture the prince used when
Last here, in its full splendour.

(Aside). Somewhat tatter'd,
And devilish damp, but fine enough by torch-light ;
And that's enough for your right noble blood
Of twenty quarterings upon a hatchment ;
So let their bearer sleep 'neath something like one
Now, as he one day will for ever lie.

Stral. (rising and turning to GABOR). Good night,
good people ! Sir, I trust to-morrow
Will find me apter to requite your service.
In the meantime I crave your company
A moment in my chamber.

Gab. I attend you.

Stral. (after a few steps, pauses, and calls WERNER).
Friend !

Wer. Sir !

Iden. Sir ! Lord — oh Lord ! Why don't you say
His lordship, or his excellency ? Pray,
My lord, excuse this poor man's want of breeding :
He hath not been accusom'd to admission
To such a presence.

Stral. (to IDENSTEIN). Peace, intendant !

Iden. Oh !

I am dumb.

Stral. (to WERNER). Have you been long here ?

Wer. Long ?

Stral. I sought

An answer, not an echo.

Wer. You may seek

Both from the walls. I am not used to answer
Those whom I know not.

Stral. Indeed ! Ne'er the less,
You might reply with courtesy to what
Is ask'd in kindness.

Wer. When I know it such,
I will requite — that is, *reply* — in unison.

Stral. The intendant said, you had been detain'd by
sickness —

If I could aid you — journeying the same way ?

Wer. (quickly). I am not journeying the same way !

Stral. How know ye

That, ere you know my route ?

Wer. Because there is
But one way that the rich and poor must tread
Together. You diverged from that dread path
Some hours ago, and I some days : henceforth
Our roads must lie asunder, though they tend
All to one home.

Stral. Your language is above
Your station.

Wer. (bitterly). Is it ?

Stral. Or, at least, beyond
Your garb.

Wer. 'T is well that it is not beneath it,
As sometimes happens to the better clad.
But, in a word, what would you with me ?

Stral. (startled). I ?

Wer. Yes — you ! You know me not, and question
me,

And wonder that I answer not — not knowing
My inquisitor. Explain what you would have,
And then I'll satisfy yourself, or me.

Stral. I knew not that you had reasons for reserve.

Wer. Many have such : — Have you none ?

Stral. None which can
Interest a mere stranger.

Wer. Then forgive
The same unknown and humble stranger, if
He wishes to remain so to the man
Who can have nought in common with him.

Stral.

Sir,

I will not balk your humour, though untoward ;

I only meant you service — but good night !

Intendant, show the way ! (to GABOR). Sir, you will
with me ?

[*Exeunt STRALENHEIM and attendants ; IDEN-
STEIN and GABOR.*]

Wer. (*solus*). 'Tis he ! I am taken in the toils.
Before

I quitted Hamburg, Giulio, his late steward,

Inform'd me, that he had obtain'd an order

From Brandenburg's elector, for the arrest

Of Kruitznér (such the name I then bore) when

I came upon the frontier ; the free city

Alone preserved my freedom — till I left

Its wall's — fool that I was to quit them ! But

I deem'd this humble garb, and route obscure,

Had baffled the slow hounds in their pursuit.

What 's to be done ? He knows me not by person ;

Nor could aught, save the eye of apprehension,

Have recognised *him*, after twenty years,

We met so rarely and so coldly in

Our youth. But those about him ! Now I can

Divine the frankness of the Hungarian, who

No doubt is a mere tool and spy of Stralenheim's,

To sound and to secure me. Without means !

Sick, poor — begirt too with the flooding rivers,

Impassable even to the wealthy, with

All the appliances which purchase modes

Of overpowering perils with men's lives, —

How can I hope ! An hour ago methought

My state beyond despair ; and now, 't is such,

The past seems paradise. Another day,

And I'm detected, — on the very eve

Of honours, rights, and my inheritance,

When a few drops of gold might save me still
In favouring an escape.

Enter IDENSTEIN and FRITZ in conversation.

Fritz. Immediately.

Iden. I tell you, 't is impossible.

Fritz. It must

Be tried, however ; and if one express
Fail, you must send on others, till the answer
Arrives from Frankfort, from the commandant.

Iden. I will do what I can.

Fritz. And recollect
To spare no trouble ; you will be repaid
Tenfold.

Iden. The baron is retired to rest ?

Fritz. He hath thrown himself into an easy chair
Beside the fire, and slumbers ; and has order'd
He may not be disturb'd until eleven,
When he will take himself to bed.

Iden. Before
An hour is past I 'll do my best to serve him.

Fritz. Remember ! [Exit FRITZ.]

Iden. The devil take these great men ! they
Think all things made for them. Now here must I
Rouse up some half a dozen shivering vassals
From their scant pallets, and, at peril of
Their lives, despatch them o'er the river towards
Frankfort. Methinks the baron's own experience
Some hours ago might teach him fellow-feeling :
But no, " it *must*," and there 's an end. How now ?
Are you there, Mynheer Werner ?

Wer. You have left
Your noble guest right quickly.

Iden. Yes — he 's dozing,
And seems to like that none should sleep besides.

Here is a packet for the commandant
Of Frankfort, at all risks and all expenses ;
But I must not lose time : Good night ! [*Exit IDEN.*
Wer. " To Frankfort ! "

So, so, it thickens ! Ay, " the commandant."
This tallies well with all the prior steps
Of this cool, calculating fiend, who walks
Between me and my father's house. No doubt
He writes for a detachment to convey me
Into some secret fortress. — Sooner than
This —

[*WERNER looks around, and snatches up a knife
lying on a table in a recess.*]

Now I am master of myself at least.
Hark, — footsteps ! How do I know that Stralenheim
Will wait for even the show of that authority
Which is to overshadow usurpation ?
That he suspects me 's certain. I'm alone ;
He with a numerous train. I weak ; he strong
In gold, in numbers, rank, authority.
I nameless, or involving in my name
Destruction, till I reach my own domain ;
He full-blown with his titles, which impose
Still further on these obscure petty burghers
Than they could do elsewhere. Hark ! nearer still !
I'll to the secret passage, which communicates
With the — No ! all is silent — 't was my fancy ! —
Still as the breathless interval between
The flash and thunder : — I must hush my soul
Amidst its perils. Yet I will retire,
To see if still be unexplored the passage
I wot of : it will serve me as a den
Of secrecy for some hours, at the worst.

[*WERNER draws a panel, and exit, closing it
after him.*]

Enter GABOR and JOSEPHINE.

Gab. Where is your husband?

Jos. *Here,* I thought: I left him
Not long since in his chamber. But these rooms
Have many outlets, and he may be gone
To accompany the intendant.

Gab. Baron Stralenheim
Put many questions to the intendant on
The subject of your lord, and, to be plain,
I have my doubts if he means well.

Jos. Alas!
What can there be in common with the proud
And wealthy baron, and the unknown Werner?

Gab. That you know best.

Jos. Or, if it were so, how
Come you to stir yourself in his behalf,
Rather than that of him whose life you saved?

Gab. I help'd to save him, as in peril; but
I did not pledge myself to serve him in
Oppression. I know well these nobles, and
Their thousand modes of trampling on the poor.
I have proved them; and my spirit boils up when
I find them practising against the weak: —
This is my only motive.

Jos. It would be
Not easy to persuade my consort of
Your good intentions.

Gab. Is he so suspicious?

Jos. He was not once; but time and troubles have
Made him what you beheld.

Gab. I'm sorry for it.
Suspicion is a heavy armour, and
With its own weight impedes more than protects.
Good night! I trust to meet with him at daybreak.

[*Exit GABOR.*]

Re-enter IDENSTEIN and some Peasants. JOSEPHINE retires up the Hall.

First Peasant. But if I'm drown'd ?

Iden. Why, you will be well paid for 't,
And have risk'd more than drowning for as much,
I doubt not.

Second Peasant. But our wives and families ?

Iden. Cannot be worse off than they are, and may
Be better.

Third Peasant. I have neither, and will venture.

Iden. That 's right. A gallant carle, and fit to be
A soldier. I'll promote you to the ranks
In the prince's body-guard — if you succeed :
And you shall have besides, in sparkling coin,
Two thalers.

Third Peasant. No more !

Iden. Out upon your avarice !
Can that low vice alloy so much ambition ?
I tell thee, fellow, that two thalers in
Small change will subdivide into a treasure.
Do not five hundred thousand heroes daily
Risk lives and souls for the tithe of one thaler ?
When had you half the sum ?

Third Peasant. Never — but ne'er
The less I must have three.

Iden. Have you forgot
Whose vassal you were born, knave ?

Third Peasant. No — the prince's,
And not the stranger's.

Iden. Sirrah ! in the prince's
Absence, I'm sovereign ; and the baron is
My intimate connection ; — " Cousin Idenstein !
(Quoth he) you 'll order out a dozen villains."
And so, you villains ! troop — march — march, I say ;
And if a single dog's ear of this packet
Be sprinkled by the Oder — look to it !

For every page of paper, shall a hide
Of yours be stretch'd as parchment on a drum,
Like Ziska's skin, to beat alarm to all
Refractory vassals, who can not effect
Impossibilities— Away, ye earth-worms !

[Exit, driving them out.]

Jos. (coming forward). I fain would shun these
scenes, too oft repeated,

Of feudal tyranny o'er petty victims ;
I cannot aid, and will not witness such.
Even here, in this remote, unnamed, dull spot,
The dimmest in the district's map, exist
The insolence of wealth in poverty
O'er something poorer still — the pride of rank
In servitude, o'er something still more servile ;
And vice in misery affecting still
A tatter'd splendour. What a state of being !
In Tuscany, my own dear sunny land,
Our nobles were but citizens and merchants,
Like Cosmo. We had evils, but not such
As these ; and our all-ripe and gushing valleys
Made poverty more cheerful, where each herb
Was in itself a meal, and every vine
Rain'd, as it were, the beverage which makes glad
The heart of man ; and the ne'er unfelt sun
(But rarely clouded, and when clouded, leaving
His warmth behind in memory of his beams)
Makes the worn mantle, and the thin robe, less
Oppressive than an emperor's jewell'd purple.
But, here ! the despots of the north appear
To imitate the ice-wind of their clime,
Searching the shivering vassal through his rags,
To wring his soul — as the bleak elements
His form. And 't is to be amongst these sovereigns
My husband pants ! and such his pride of birth —
That twenty years of usage, such as no

But let us to our chamber.

Jos. Yet one question —
What hast thou done?
Wer. (*fiercely*). Left one thing undone, which
Had made all well: let me not think of it!
Away!
Jos. Alas, that I should doubt of thee! [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Hall in the same Palace.

Enter IDENSTEIN and Others.

Iden. Fine doings! goodly doings! honest doings!
A baron pillaged in a prince's palace!
Where, till this hour, such a sin ne'er was heard of.

Fritz. It hardly could, unless the rats despoil'd
The mice of a few shreds of tapestry.

Iden. Oh! that I e'er should live to see this day!
The honour of our city's gone for ever.

Fritz. Well, but now to discover the delinquent:
The baron is determined not to lose
This sum without a search.

Iden. And so am I.

Fritz. But whom do you suspect?

Iden. Suspect! all people
Without — within — above — below — Heaven help me!

Fritz. Is there no other entrance to the chamber?

Iden. None whatsoever.

Fritz. Are you sure of that?

Iden. Certain. I have lived and served here since
my birth,

And if there were such, must have heard of such,
Or seen it.

Fritz. Then it must be some one who
Had access to the antechamber.

Iden. Doubtless.

Fritz. The man call'd *Werner*'s poor!

Iden. Poor as a miser.¹

But lodged so far off, in the other wing,
By which there's no communication with
The baron's chamber, that it can't be he.
Besides, I bade him "good night" in the hall,
Almost a mile off, and which only leads
To his own apartment, about the same time
When this burglarious, larcenous felony
Appears to have been committed.

Fritz. There's another,
The stranger — —

Iden. The Hungarian?

Fritz. He who help'd
To fish the baron from the Oder.

Iden. Not
Unlikely. But, hold — might it not have been
One of the suite?

Fritz. How? *We*, sir!

Iden. No — not *you*,
But some of the inferior knaves. You say
The baron was asleep in the great chair —
The velvet chair — in his embroider'd night-gown;
His toilet spread before him, and upon it
A cabinet with letters, papers, and
Several rouleaux of gold; of which *one* only

¹ ["Your printer has made an odd mistake — 'poor as a mouse' instead of 'poor as a miser.' The expression may seem strange, but it is only a translation of 'semper avarus eget!'"] — *Lord Byron to Mr. Murray.*]

Has disappear'd : — the door unbolted, with
No difficult access to any.

Fritz. Good sir,
Be not so quick ; the honour of the corps
Which forms the baron's household 's unimpeach'd
From steward to scullion, save in the fair way
Of peculation ; such as in accompts,
Weights, measures, larder, cellar, buttery,
Where all men take their prey ; as also in
Postage of letters, gathering of rents,
Purveying feasts, and understanding with
The honest trades who furnish noble masters :
But for your petty, picking, downright thievery,
We scorn it as we do board-wages. Then
Had one of our folks done it, he would not
Have been so poor a spirit as to hazard
His neck for *one* rouleau, but have swōop'd all ;
Also the cabinet, if portable.

Iden. There is some sense in that —

Fritz. No, sir, be sure
'T was none of our corps ; but some petty, trivial
Picker and stealer, without art or genius.
The only question is — Who else could have
Access, save the Hungarian and yourself?

Iden. You don't mean me ?

Fritz. No, sir ; I honour more
Your talents —

Iden. And my principles, I hope.

Fritz. Of course. But to the point : What's to be
done ?

Iden. Nothing — but there's a good deal to be said.
We'll offer a reward ; move heaven and earth,
And the police (though there's none nearer than
Frankfort) ; post notices in manuscript
(For we've no printer) ; and set by my clerk
To read them (for few can, save he and I).

We'll send out villains to strip beggars, and
Scafeh empty pockets ; also, to arrest
All gipsies, and ill-clothed and sallow people.
Prisoners we'll have at least, if not the culprit ;
And for the baron's gold — if 't is not found,
At least he shall have the full satisfaction
Of melting twice its substance in the raising
The ghost of this rouleau. Here 's alchemy
For your lord's losses !

Fritz. He hath found a better.

Iden. Where ?

Fritz. In a most immense inheritance.
The late Count Siegendorf, his distant kinsman,
Is dead near Prague, in his castle, and my lord
Is on his way to take possession.

Iden. Was there
No heir ?

Fritz. Oh, yes ; but he has disappear'd
Long from the world's eye, and perhaps the world.
A prodigal son, beneath his father's ban
For the last twenty years ; for whom his sire
Refused to kill the fatted calf ; and, therefore,
If living, he must chew the husks still. But
The baron would find means to silence him,
Were he to re-appear : he 's politic,
And has much influence with a certain court.

Iden. He 's fortunate.

Fritz. 'T is true, there is a grandson,
Whom the late count reclaim'd from his son's hands,
And educated as his heir ; but then
His birth is doubtful.

Iden. How so ?

Fritz. His sire made
A left-hand, love, imprudent sort of marriage,
With an Italian exile's dark-eyed daughter :
Noble, they say, to ; but no match for such

A house as Siegendorf's. The grandsire ill
Could brook the alliance; and could ne'er be brought
To see the parents, though he took the son.

Iden. If he's a lad of mettle, he may yet
Dispute your claim, and weave a web that may
Puzzle your baron to unravel.

Fritz. Why,
For mettle, he has quite enough: they say,
He forms a happy mixture of his sire
And grandsire's qualities, — impetuous as
The former, and deep as the latter; but
The strangest is, that he too disappear'd
Some months ago.

Iden. The devil he did!

Fritz. Why, yes:
It must have been at his suggestion, at
An hour so critical as was the eve
Of the old man's death, whose heart was broken by it.

Iden. Was there no cause assign'd?

Fritz. Plenty, no doubt,
And none perhaps the true one. Some averr'd
It was to seek his parents; some because
The old man held his spirit in so strictly
(But that could scarce be, for he doted on him);
A third believed he wish'd to serve in war,
But peace being made soon after his departure,
He might have since return'd, were that the motive;
A fourth set charitably have surmised,
As there was something strange and mystic in him,
That in the wild exuberance of his nature
He had join'd the black bands, who lay waste Lusatia,
The mountains of Bohemia and Silesia,
Since the last years of war had dwindled into
A kind of general condottiero system
Of bandit warfare; each troop with its chief,
And all against mankind.

Iden. That cannot be.
A young heir, bred to wealth and luxury,
To risk his life and honours with disbanded
Soldiers and desperadoes !

Fritz. Heaven best knows
But there are human natures so allied
Unto the savage love of enterprise,
That they will seek for peril as a pleasure.
I've heard that nothing can reclaim your Indian,
Or tame the tiger, though their infancy
Were fed on milk and honey. After all,
Your Wallenstein, your Tilly and Gustavus,
Your Bannier, and your Torstenson and Weimar,
Were but the same thing upon a grand scale ;
And now that they are gone, and peace proclaim'd,
They who would follow the same pastime must
Pursue it on their own account. Here comes
The baron, and the Saxon stranger, who
Was his chief aid in yesterday's escape,
But did not leave the cottage by the Oder
Until this morning.

Enter STRALENHEIM and ULRIC.

Stral. Since you have refused
All compensation, gentle stranger, save
Inadequate thanks, you almost check even them,
Making me feel the worthlessness of words,
And blush at my own barren gratitude,
They seem so niggardly, compared with what
Your courteous courage did in my behalf——

Ulr. I pray you press the theme no further.

Stral. But
Can I not serve you ? You are young, and of
That mould which throws out heroes ; fair in favour ;
Brave, I know, by my living now to say so ;
And doubtlessly, with such a form and heart,

Would look into the fiery eyes of war,
As ardently for glory as you dared
An obscure death to save an unknown stranger,
In an as perilous, but opposite, element.
You are made for the service : I have served ;
Have rank by birth and soldiership, and friends,
Who shall be yours. 'T is true this pause of peace
Favours such views at present scantily ;
But 't will not last, men's spirits are too stirring ;
And, after thirty years of conflict, peace
Is but a petty war, as the times show us
In every forest, or a mere arm'd truce.
War will reclaim his own ; and, in the meantime,
You might obtain a post, which would ensure
A higher soon, and, by my influence, fail not
To rise. I speak of Bradenburgh, wherein
I stand well with the elector ; in Bohemia,
Like you, I am a stranger, and we are now
Upon its frontier.

Ulr. You perceive my garb
Is Saxon, and of course my service due
To my own sovereign. If I must decline
Your offer, 't is with the same feeling which
Induced it.

Stral. Why, this is mere usury !
I owe my life to you, and you refuse
The acquittance of the interest of the debt,
To heap more obligations on me, till
I bow beneath them.

Ulr. You shall say so when
I claim the payment.

Stral. Well, sir, since you will not —
You are nobly born ?

Ulr. I have heard my kinsmen say so.

Stral. Your actions show it. Might I ask your
name ?

Ulr. Ulric.

Stral. Your house's?

Ulr. When I 'm worthy of it,
I'll answer you.

Stral. (aside). Most probably an Austrian,
Whom these unsettled times forbid to boast
His lineage on these wild and dangerous frontiers,
Where the name of his country is abhorr'd.

[*Aloud to FRITZ and IDENSTEIN.*

So, sirs ! how have ye sped in your researches ?

Iden. Indifferent well, your excellency.

Stral. Then

I am to deem the plunderer is caught ?

Iden. Humph ! — not exactly.

Stral. Or at least suspected ?

Iden. Oh ! for that matter, very much suspected.

Stral. Who may he be ?

Iden. Why, don't you know, my lord ?

Stral. How should I ? I was fast asleep.

Iden. And so

Was I, and that's the cause I know no more

Than does your excellency.

Stral. Dolt !

Iden. Why, if

Your lordship, being robb'd, don't recognise
The rogue ; how should I, not being robb'd, identify
The thief among so many ? In the crowd,
May it please your excellency, your thief looks
Exactly like the rest, or rather better :
'Tis only at the bar and in the dungeon,
That wise men know your felon by his features ;
But I'll engage, that if seen there but once,
Whether he be found criminal or no,
His face shall be so.

Stral. (to FRITZ). Prythee, Fritz, inform me
What hath been done to trace the fellow ?

*Fritz.**Faith,*

My lord, not much as yet, except conjecture.

Stral. Besides the loss (which, I must own, affects me
Just now materially), I needs would find
*The villain out of public motives; for
So dexterous a spoiler, who could creep
Through my attendants, and so many peopled
And lighted chambers, on my rest, and snatch
The gold before my scarce-closed eyes, would soon
Leave bare your borough, Sir Intendant!

*Iden.**True;*

If there were aught to carry off, my lord.

Ulr. What is all this?

Stral. You join'd us but this morning,
And have not heard that I was robb'd last night.

Ulr. Some rumour of it reach'd me as I pass'd
The outer chambers of the palace, but,
I know no further.

Stral. It is a strange business;
The intendant can inform you of the facts.

Iden. Most willingly. You see —

Stral. (impatiently). Defer your tale,
Till certain of the hearer's patience.

*Iden.**That*

Can only be approved by proofs. You see —

Stral. (again interrupting him, and addressing
ULRIC).

In short, I was asleep upon a chair,
My cabinet before me, with some gold
Upon it (more than I much like to lose,
Though in part only): some ingenious person
Contrived to glide through all my own attendants,
Besides those of the place, and bore away
A hundred golden ducats, which to find
I would be fain, and there's an end. Perhaps
You (as I still am rather faint) would add

To yesterday's great obligation, this,
Though slighter, yet not slight, to aid these men
(Who seem but lukewarm) in recovering it?

Ulr. Most willingly, and without loss of time —
(*To IDENSTEIN.*) Come hither, mynheer!

Iden. But so much haste bodes
Right little speed, and —

Ulr. Standing motionless
None; so let's march: we'll talk as we go on.

Iden. But —

Ulr. Show the spot, and then I'll answer you.

Fritz. I will, sir, with his excellency's leave.

Stral. Do so, and take yon old ass with you.

Fritz. Hence!

Ulr. Come on, old oracle, expound thy riddle!

[*Exit with IDENSTEIN and FRITZ.*]

Stral. (*solus*). A stalwart, active, soldier-looking
stripling,

Handsome as Hercules ere his first labour,
And with a brow of thought beyond his years
When in repose, till his eye kindles up
In answering yours. I wish I could engage him:
I have need of some such spirits near me now,
For this inheritance is worth a struggle.
And though I am not the man to yield without one,
Neither are they who now rise up between me
And my desire. The boy, they say, 's a bold one;
But he hath play'd the truant in some hour
Of freakish folly, leaving fortune to
Champion his claims. That's well. The father, whom
For years I've track'd, as does the blood-hound, never
In sight, but constantly in scent, had put me
To fault; but *here* I have him, and that's better.
It must be *he*! All circumstance proclaim^e it;
And careless voices, knowing not the cause
Of my enquiries, still confirm it. — Yes!

The man, his bearing, and the mystery
 Of his arrival, and the time; the account, too,
 The intendant gave (for I have not beheld her)
 Of his wife's dignified but foreign aspect;
 Besides the antipathy with which we met,
 As snakes and lions shrink back from each other
 By secret instinct that both must be foes
 Deadly, without being natural prey to either;
 All — all — confirm it to my mind. However,
 We'll grapple, ne'ertheless. In a few hours
 The order comes from Frankfort, if these waters
 Rise not the higher (and the weather favours
 Their quick abatement), and I'll have him safe
 Within a dungeon, where he may avouch
 His real estate and name; and there's no harm done,
 Should he prove other than I deem. This robbery
 (Save for the actual loss) is lucky also: •
 He's poor, and that's suspicious — he's unknown,
 And that's defenceless. — True, we have no proofs
 Of guilt, — but what hath he of innocence?
 Were he a man indifferent to my prospects,
 In other bearings, I should rather lay
 The inculpation on the Hungarian, who
 Hath something which I like not; and alone
 Of all around, except the intendant, and
 The prince's household and my own, had ingress
 Familiar to the chamber.

Enter GABOR.

Friend, how fare you?

Gab. As those who fare well everywhere, when they
 Have supp'd and slumber'd, no great matter how —
 And you, my lord?

➤ *Stral.* • Better in rest than purse:
 Mine inn is like to cost me dear.

Gab. I heard
Of your late loss; but 't is a trifle to
One of your order.

Stral. You would hardly think so,
Were the loss yours.

Gab. I never had so much
(At once) in my whole life, and therefore am not
Fit to decide. But I came here to seek you.
Your couriers are turn'd back — I have outstripp'd
them,
In my return.

Stral. You! — Why?

Gab. I went at daybreak,
To watch for the abatement of the river,
As being anxious to resume my journey.
Your messengers were all check'd like myself;
And, seeing the case hopeless, I await
The current's pleasure.

Stral. Would the dogs were in it!
Why did they not, at least, attempt the passage?
I order'd this at all risks.

Gab. Could you order
The Oder to divide, as Moses did
The Red Sea (scarcely redder than the flood
Of the swoln stream), and be obey'd, perhaps
They might have ventured.

Stral. I must see to it:
The knaves! the slaves! — but they shall smart for this.
[Exit STRALENHEIM.]

Gab. (solus). There goes my noble, feudal, self-
will'd baron!

Epitome of what brave chivalry
The preux chevaliers of the good old times
Have left us. Yesterday he would have given
His lands (if he hath any), and, still dearer,
His sixteen quarterings, for as much fresh air

As would have fill'd a bladder, while he lay
 Gurgling and foaming half way through the window
 Of his o'erset and water-logg'd conveyance ;
 And now he storms at half a dozen wretches
 Because they love their lives too ! Yet, he's right :
 'Tis strange they should, when such as he may put
 them

To hazard at his pleasure. Oh ! thou world !
 Thou art indeed a melancholy jest ! [Exit GABOR

SCENE II.

The Apartment of WERNER, in the Palace.

Enter JOSEPHINE and ULRIC.

Jos. Stand back, and let me look on thee again !
 My Ulric ! — my beloved ! — can it be —
 After twelve years ?

Ulr. My dearest mother !

Jos. Yes !
 My dream is realised — how beautiful ! —
 How more than all I sigh'd for ! Heaven receive
 A mother's thanks — a mother's tears of joy !
 This is indeed thy work ! — At such an hour, too,
 He comes not only as a son, but saviour.

Ulr. If such a joy await me, it must double
 What I now feel, and lighten from my heart
 A part of the long debt of duty, not
 Of love (for that was ne'er withheld) — forgive me !
 This long delay was not my fault.¹

¹ [Ulric behaves far too hopefully and too dutifully for an assassin and a brigand. He is of the Giaour and the Lara order — a *Westall* ruffian. — ECL. REV.]

Jos. I know it,
But cannot think of sorrow now, and doubt
If I e'er felt it, 't is so dazzled from
My memory by this oblivious transport ! —
My son !

Enter WERNER.

Wer. What have we here, — more strangers ?

Jos. No !

Look upon him ! What do you see ?

Wer. A stripling,

For the first time —

Ulr. (kneeling). For twelve long years, my father !

Wer. Oh, God !

Jos. He faints !

Wer. No — I am better now —

Ulric ! (*Embraces him.*)

Ulr. My father, Siegendorf !

Wer. (starting). Hush ! boy —

The walls may hear that name !

Ulr. What then ?

Wer. Why, then —

But we will talk of that anon. Remember,
I must be known here but as Werner. Come !
Come to my arms again ! Why, thou look'st all
I should have been, and was not. Josephine !
Sure 't is no father's fondness dazzles me ;
But, had I seen that form amid ten thousand
Youth of the choicest, my heart would have chosen
This for my son !

Ulr. And yet you knew me not !

Wer. Alas ! I have had that upon my soul
Which makes me look on all men with an eye
That only knows the evil at first glance.

Ulr. My memory served me far more fondly : I
Have not forgotten aught ; and oft-times in

The proud and princely halls of — (I'll not name them,
As you say that 't is perilous) — but i' the pomp
Of your sire's feudal mansion, I look'd back
To the Bohemian mountains many a sunset,
And wept to see another day go down
O'er thee and me, with those huge hills between us.
'They shall not part us more.

Wer.

I know not that.

Are you aware my father is no more?

Ulr. Oh, heavens! I left him in a green old age,
And looking like the oak, worn, but still steady
Amidst the elements, whilst younger trees
Fell fast around him. 'T was scarce three months since.

Wer. Why did you leave him?

Jos. (embracing ULRIC). Can you ask that question?
Is he not here?

Wer. True; he hath sought his parents,
And found them; but, oh! *how*, and in what state!

Ulr. All shall be better'd. What we have to do
Is to proceed, and to assert our rights
Or rather yours; for I waive all, unless
Your father has disposed in such a sort
Of his broad lands as to make mine the foremost,
So that I must prefer my claim for form:
But I trust better, and that all is yours.

Wer. Have you not heard of Stralenheim?

Ulr.

I saved

His life but yesterday: he's here.

Wer.

You saved

The serpent who will sting us all!

Ulr.

You speak

Riddles: what is this *Stralenheim* to us? [lands:

Wer. Every thing. One who claims our father's
Our distant kinsman, and our nearest foe.

Ulr. I never heard his name till now. The count,
Indeed, spoke sometimes of a kinsman, who,

If his own line should fail, might be remotely
Involved in the succession ; but his titles
Were never named before me — and what then ?
His right must yield to ours.

Wer. Ay, if at Prague ;
But here he is all-powerful ; and has spread
Snares for thy father, which, if hitherto
He hath escaped them, is by fortune, not
By favour.

Ulr. Doth he personally know you ?

Wer. No ; but he guesses shrewdly at my person,
As he betray'd last night ; and I, perhaps,
But owe my temporary liberty
To his uncertainty.

Ulr. I think you wrong him
(Excuse me for the phrase) ; but Stralenheim
Is not what you pre-judge him, or, if so,
He owes me something both for past and present.
I saved his life, he therefore trusts in me.
He hath been plunder'd too, since he came hither :
Is sick ; a stranger ; and as such not now
Able to trace the villain who hath robb'd him :
I have pledged myself to do so ; and the business
Which brought me here was chiefly that : ¹ but I
Have found, in searching for another's dross,
My own whole treasure — you, my parents !

Wer. (agitatedly). Who
Taught you to mouth that name of “ villain ? ”

¹ [The following is the original passage in the novel : — “ ‘ Stralenheim,’ said Conrad, ‘ does not appear to be altogether the man you take him for : but were it even otherwise, he owes me gratitude not only for the past, but for what he supposes to be my present employment. I saved his life, and he therefore places confidence in me. He hath been robbed last night — is sick — a stranger — and in no condition to discover the villain who has plundered him ; and the business on which I sought the intendant was chiefly that,’ ” &c. — Miss LEE.]

Ulr. What
More noble name belongs to common thieves?

Wer. Who taught you thus to brand an unknown
With an infernal stigma? [being

Ulr. My own feelings
Taught me to name a ruffian from his deeds.

Wer. Who taught you, long-sought and ill-found
boy! that

It would be safe for my own son to insult me?

Ulr. I named a villain. What is there in common
With such a being and my father?

Wer. Every thing!
That ruffian is thy father! ¹

Jos. Oh, my son!
Believe him not — and yet! — (her voice falters.)

Ulr. (starts, looks earnestly at WERNER, and then says,
slowly,) And you avow it?

Wer. Ulric, before you dare despise your father,
Learn to divine and judge his actions. Young,
Rash, new to life, and rear'd in luxury's lap,
Is it for you to measure passion's force,
Or misery's temptation? Wait — (not long,
It cometh like the night, and quickly) — Wait! —
Wait till, like me, your hopes are blighted ² — till

¹ [“ ‘ And who,’ said he, ‘ has entitled you to brand thus with ignominious epithets a being you do not know? Who has taught you that it would be even safe for my son to insult me?’ — ‘ It is not necessary to know the person of a ruffian,’ replied Conrad indignantly, ‘ to give him the appellation he merits: — and what is there in common between my father and such a character?’ — ‘ Every thing,’ said Siegendorf, bitterly, — ‘ for that ruffian was your father!’ ” — LEE.]

² [“ ‘ Conrad, before you thus presume to chastise me with your eye, learn to understand my actions. Young, and inexperienced in the world, — reposing hitherto in the bosom of indulgence and luxury, is it for you to judge of the force of the passions or the temptations of misery? Wait till, like me, you have blighted your

Sorrow and shame are handmaids of your cabin ;
 Famine and poverty your guests at table ;
 Despair your bed-fellow — then rise, but not
 From sleep, and judge ! Should that day e'er arrive —
 Should you see then the serpent, who hath coil'd
 Himself around all that is dear and noble
 Of you and yours, lie slumbering in your path,
 With but *his* folds between your steps and happiness,
 When *he*, who lives but to tear from you name,
 Lands, life itself, lies at your mercy, with
 Chance your conductor ; midnight for your mantle ;
 The bare knife in your hand, and earth asleep,
 Even to your deadliest foe ; and he æ't were
 Inviting death, by looking like it, while
 His death alone can save you : — 'Thank your God !
 If then, like me, content with petty plunder,
 You turn aside — I did so.

Ulr.

But —

Wer. (abruptly). Hear me !

I will not brook a human voice — scarce dare
 Listen to my own (if that be human still) —
 Hear me ! you do not know this man — I do.¹
 He's mean, deceitful, avaricious. You
 Deem yourself safe, as young and brave ; but learn
 None are secure from desperation, few
 From subtilty. My worst foe, Stralenheim,
 Housed in a prince's palace, couch'd within

fairest hopes — have endured humiliation and sorrow — poverty and famine — before you pretend to judge of their effects on you ! Should that miserable day ever arrive," &c. — LEE.]

¹ [“ You do not know this man,” continued he : ‘ I do ! I believe him to be mean, sordid, deceitful ! You will conceive yourself safe, because you are young and brave ! Learn, however, none are so secure but desperation or subtilty may reach them ! Stralenheim, in the palace of a prince, was in my power ! My knife was held over him — I forbore — and I am now in his,’ ” &c. — LEE.]

A prince's chamber, lay below my knife!
 An instant — a mere motion — the least impulse —
 Had swept him and all fears of mine from earth.
 He was within my power — my knife was raised —
 Withdrawn — and I 'm in his : — are you not so ?
 Who tells you that he knows you *not* ? Who says
 He hath not lured you here to end you ? or
 To plunge you, with your parents, in a dungeon ?
[He pauses]

Ulr. Proceed — proceed !

Wer. *Me* he hath ever known,
 And hunted through each change of time — name —
 fortune —

And why not *you* ? Are you more versed in men ?
 He wound snares round me ; flung along my path
 Reptiles, whom, in my youth, I would have spurn'd •
 Even from my presence ; but, in spurning now,
 Fill only with fresh venom. Will you be
 More patient ? *Ulr.* ! — *Ulr.* ! — there are crimes
 Made venial by the occasion, and temptations
 Which nature cannot master or forbear. ¹

Ulr. (*looks first at him, and then at JOSEPHINE*). My
 mother !

Wer. Ah ! I thought so : you have now
 Only one parent. I have lost alike
 Father and son, and stand alone.

Ulr.

But stay !

[*WERNER rushes out of the chamber.*]

¹ ["Me he has known invariably through every change of fortune or of name — and why not you ? Me he has entrapped — are you more discreet ? He has wound the snares of Idenstein around me ; — of a reptile whom, a few years ago, I would have spurned from my presence, and whom, in spurning now, I have furnished with fresh venom. Will you be more patient ? Conrad, Conrad, there are crimes rendered venial by the occasion, and temptations too exquisite for human fortitude to master or forbear," &c. — *LEE.*]

Jos. (to ULRIC). Follow him not, until this storm of
 passion
 Abates. Think'st thou, that were it well for him,
 I had not follow'd ?

Ulr. I obey you, mother,
 Although reluctantly. My first act shall not
 Be one of disobedience.

Jos. Oh ! he is good !
 Condemn him not from his own mouth, but trust
 To me, who have borne so much with him, and for him,
 That this is but the surface of his soul,
 And that the depth is rich in better things.

Ulr. These then are but my father's principles ?
 My mother thinks not with him ?

Jos. Nor doth he
 Think as he speaks. Alas ! long years of grief
 Have made him sometimes thus.

Ulr. Explain to me
 More clearly, then, these claims of Stralenheim,
 That, when I see the subject in its bearings,
 I may prepare to face him, or at least
 To extricate you from your present perils.
 I pledge myself to accomplish this — but would
 I had arrived a few hours sooner !

Jos. Ay !
 Hadst thou but done so !

Enter GABOR and IDENSTEIN, with Attendants.

Gab. (to ULRIC). I have sought you, comrade.
 So this is my reward !

Ulr. What do you mean ?

Gab. 'Sdeath ! have I lived to these years, and for this !
(To IDENSTEIN). But for your age and folly, I
 would —

Iden. Help !
 Hands off ! Touch an intendant !

Gab. Do not think
I'll honour you so much as save your throat
From the Ravenstone¹ by choking you myself.

Iden. I thank you for the respite. but there are
Those who have greater need of it than me.

Ulr. Unriddle this vile wrangling, or —

Gab. At once, then,
The baron has been robb'd, and upon me
This worthy personage has deign'd to fix
His kind suspicions — me! whom he ne'er saw
Till yester' evening.

Iden. Wouldst have me suspect
My own acquaintances? You have to learn
That I keep better company.

Gab. You shall
Keep the best shortly, and the last for all men.
The worms! you hound of malice!

[*GABOR seizes on him.*
Ulr. (interfering). Nay, no violence:
He's old, unarm'd — be temperate, Gabor!

Gab. (letting go IDENSTEIN). True:
I am a fool to lose myself because
Fools deem me knave: it is their homage.

Ulr. (to IDENSTEIN). How
Fare you?

Iden. Help!

Ulr. I have help'd you.

Iden. Kill him! then
I'll say so.

Gab. I am calm — live on!

Iden. That's more
Than you shall do, if there be judge or judgment
In Germany. The baron shall decide!

¹ The Ravenstone, "Rabenstein," is the *stone gibbet* of Germany, and so called from the ravens perching on it.

Gab. Does *he* abet you in your accusation ?

Iden. Does he not ?

Gab. Then next time let him go sink
Ere I go hang for snatching him from drowning.
But here he comes !

Enter STRALENHEIM.

Gab. (*goes up to him*). My noble lord, I'm here !

Stral. Well, sir !

Gab. Have you aught with me ?

Stral. What should I

Have with you ?

Gab. You know best, if yesterday's
Flood has not wash'd away your memory ;
But that's a trifle. I stand here accused,
In phrases not equivocal, by yon
Intendant, of the pillage of your person
Or chamber : — is the charge your own or his ?

Stral. I accuse no man.

Gab. Then you acquit me, baron ?

Stral. I know not whom to accuse, or to acquit,
Or scarcely to suspect.

Gab. But you at least
Should know whom *not* to suspect. I am insulted —
Oppress'd here by these menials, and I look
To you for remedy — teach them their duty !
To look for thieves at home were part of it,
If duly taught ; but, in one word, if I
Have an accuser, let it be a man
Worthy to be so of a man like me.
I am your equal.

Stral. You !

Gab. Ay, sir ; and, for
Aught that you know, superior ; but proceed —
I do not ask for hints, and surmises,
And circumstance, and proofs ; I know enough

Of what I have done for you, and what you owe me,
 To have at least waited your payment rather
 Than paid myself, had I been eager of
 Your gold. I also know, that were I even
 The villain I am deem'd, the service render'd
 So recently would not permit you to
 Pursue me to the death, except through shame,
 Such as would leave your scutcheon but a blank.
 But this is nothing: I demand of you
 Justice upon your unjust servants, and
 From your own lips a disavowal of
 All sanction of their insolence: thus much
 You owe to the unknown, who asks no more,
 And never thought to have ask'd so much.

Stral. This tone
 May be of innocence.

Gab. 'Sdeath! who dare doubt it,
 Except such villains as ne'er had it?

Stral. You
 Are hot, sir.

Gab. Must I turn an icicle
 Before the breath of menials, and their master?

Stral. Ulric! you know this man; I found him in
 Your company.

Gab. We found *you* in the Oder;
 Would we had left you there!

Stral. I give you thanks, sir.

Gab. I've earn'd them; but might have earn'd
 more from others,

Perchance, if I had left you to your fate.

Stral. Ulric! you know this man?

Gab. No more than you do,
 If he avouches not my honour.

Ulric. I
 Can vouch your courage, and, as far as my
 Own brief connection led me, honour.

Stral. Then
I'm satisfied.

Gab. (ironically). Right easily, methinks.
What is the spell in his asseveration
More than in mine?

Stral. I merely said that *I*
Was satisfied — not that you are absolved.

Gab. Again! Am I accused or no?

Stral. Go to!

You wax too insolent. If circumstance
And general suspicion be against you,
Is the fault mine? Is 't not enough that I
Decline all question of your guilt or innocence?

Gab. My lord, my lord, this is mere cozenage,
A vile equivocation; you well know
Your doubts are certainties to all around you —
Your looks a voice — your frowns a sentence; you
Are practising your power on me — because
You have it; but beware! you know not whom
You strive to tread on.

Stral. Threat'st thou?

Gab. Not so much
As you accuse. You hint the basest injury,
And I retort it with an open warning. [thing,

Stral. As you have said, 't is true I owe you some-
For which you seem disposed to pay yourself.

Gab. Not with your gold.

Stral. With bootless insolence.

[*To his Attendants and IDENSTEIN.*
You need not further to molest this man,
But let him go his way. Ulric, good morrow!

[*Exit STRALENHEIM, IDENSTEIN, and Attendants.*

Gab. (following). I'll after him and —

Ulr. (stopping him).

Not a step.

Gab.

Who shall

Oppose me?

Ulr. Your own reason, with a moment's
Thought.

Gab. Must I bear this?

Ulr. Pshaw ! we all must bear
The arrogance of something higher than
Ourselves — the highest cannot temper Satan,
Nor the lowest his vicegerents upon earth.
I've seen you brave the elements, and bear
Things which had made this silkworm cast his skin —
And shrink you from a few sharp sneers and words ?

Gab. Must I bear to be deem'd a thief ? If 't were
A bandit of the woods, I could have borne it —
There 's something daring in it : — but to steal
The moneys of a slumbering man ! —

Ulr. It seems, then,
You are *not* guilty ?

Gab. Do I hear aright ?
You too !

Ulr. I merely ask'd a simple question.

Gab. If the judge ask'd me, I would answer " No " —
To you I answer *thus*. (*He draws.*)

Ulr. (*drawing*). With all my heart !

Jos. Without there ! Ho ! help ! help ! — Oh, God !
here 's murder !

[*Exit JOSEPHINE, shrieking.*]

*GABOR and ULRIC fight. GABOR is disarmed just as
STRALENHEIM, JOSEPHINE, IDENSTFIN, &c. re-enter.*

Jos. Oh ! glorious heaven ! He 's safe !

Stral. (*to JOSEPHINE*). Who 's safe ?

Jos. My —

Ulr. (*interrupting her with a stern look, and turning
afterwards to STRALENHEIM*). Both !

Here 's no great harm done.

Stral. What hath caused all this ?

Ulr. You, baron, I believe ; but as the effect

Is harmless, let it not disturb you. — Gabor!
 There is your sword; and when you bare it next,
 Let it not be against your *friends*.

[ULRIC pronounces the last words slowly and emphatically in a low voice to GABOR.]

Gab. I thank you
 Less for my life than for your counsel.

Stral. These
 Brawls must end here.

Gab. (*taking his sword*). They shall. You have
 wrong'd me, Ulric,
 More with your unkind thoughts than sword: I would
 The last were in my bosom rather than
 The first in yours. I could have borne yon noble's
 Absurd insinuations — ignorance
 And dull suspicion are a part of his
 Entail will last him longer than his lands. —
 But I may fit *him* yet: — you have vanquish'd me.
 I was the fool of passion to conceive
 That I could cope with you, whom I had seen
 Already proved by greater perils than
 Rest in this arm. We may meet by and by,
 However — but in friendship.

[Exit GABOR.]

Stral. I will brook
 No more! This outrage following up his insults,
 Perhaps his guilt, has cancell'd all the little
 I owed him heretofore for the so-vaunted
 Aid which he added to your abler succour.
 Ulric, you are not hurt? —

Ulr. Not even by a scratch.

Stral. (*to IDENSTEIN*). Intendant! take your
 measures to secure

Yon fellow: I revoke my former lenity.
 He shall be sent to Frankfort with an escort,
 The instant that the waters have abated.

Iden. Secure him ! He hath got his sword again —
And seems to know the use on 't ; 't is his trade,
Belike ; — I'm a civilian.

Stral. Fool ! are not
Yon score of vassals dogging at your heels
Enough to seize a dozen such ? Hence ! after him !

Ulr. Baron, I do beseech you !

Stral. I must be
Obey'd. No words !

Iden. Well, if it must be so —
March, vassals ! I'm your leader, and will bring
The rear up : a wise general never should
Expose his precious life — on which all rests.
I like that article of war.

[*Exit IDENSTEIN and Attendants.*]

Stral. Come hither,
Ulric ; what does that woman here ? Oh ! now
I recognise her, 't is the stranger's wife
Whom they name " Werner."

Ulr. 'T is his name.

Stral. Indeed !
Is not your husband visible, fair dame ? —

Jos. Who seeks him ?

Stral. No one — for the present : but
I fain would parley, Ulric, with yourself
Alone.

Ulr. I will retire with you.

Jos. Not so :
You are the latest stranger, and command
All places here.

(*Aside to ULRIC, as she goes out.*) O Ulric ! have a
care —

Remember what depends on a rash word !

Ulr. (to JOSEPHINE).

Fear not ! —

[*Exit JOSEPHINE.*]

Stral. Ulric, I think that I may trust you ;

You saved my life — and acts like these beget
Unbounded confidence.

Ulr. Say on.

Stral. Mysterious
And long-engender'd circumstances (not
To be now fully enter'd on) have made
This man obnoxious — perhaps fatal to me.

Ulr. Who? Gabor, the Hungarian?

Stral. No — this "Werner" —
With the false name and habit.

Ulr. How can this be?
He is the poorest of the poor — and yellow
Sickness sits cavern'd in his hollow eye:
The man is helpless.

Stral. He is — 't is no matter; —
But if he be the man I deem (and that
He is so, all around us here — and much
That is not here — confirm my apprehension)
He must be made secure ere twelve hours further.

Ulr. And what have I to do with this?

Stral. I have sent
To Frankfort, to the governor, my friend
(I have the authority to do so by
An order of the house of Brandenburg),
For a fit escort — but this cursed flood
Bars all access, and may do for some hours.

Ulr. It is abating.

Stral. That is well.

Ulr. But how
Am I concern'd?

Stral. As one who did so much
For me, you cannot be indifferent to
That which is of more import to me than
The life you rescued. — Keep your eye on him!
The man avoids me, knows that I now know him. —
Watch him! — as you would watch the wild boar when

He makes against you in the hunter's gap —
Like him he must be spear'd.

Ulr. Why so?

Stral. He stands

Between me and a brave inheritance!
Oh! could you see it! But you shall.

Ulr. I hope so.

Stral. It is the richest of the rich Bohemia,
Unscathed by scorching war. It lies so near
The strongest city, Prague, that fire and sword
Have skinm'd it lightly: so that now, besides
Its own exuberance, it bears double value
Confronted with whole realms far and near
Made deserts.

Ulr. You describe it faithfully. [but,

Stral. Ay — could you see it, you would say so —
As I have said, you shall.

Ulr. I accept the omen.

Stral. Then claim a recompense from it and me,
Such as both may make worthy your acceptance
And services to me and mine for ever.

Ulr. And this sole, sick, and miserable wretch —
This way-worn stranger — stands between you and
This Paradise? — (As Adam did between
The devil and his) — [*Aside.*]

Stral. He doth.

Ulr. Hath he no right?

Stral. Right! none. A disinherited prodigal,
Who for these twenty years disgraced his lineage
In all his acts — but chiefly by his marriage,
And living amidst commerce-fetching burghers,
And dabbling merchants, in a mart of Jews.

Ulr. He has a wife, then?

Stral. You 'd be sorry to
Tall such your mother. You have seen the woman
He calls his wife.

Ulr. Is she not so?

Stral. No more.

Than he's your father : — an Italian girl,
The daughter of a banish'd man, who lives
On love and poverty with this same Werner.

Ulr. They are childless, then?

Stral. There is or was a bastard,
Whom the old man — the grandsire (as old age
Is ever doting) took to warm his bosom,
As it went chilly downward to the grave :
But the innp stands not in my path — he has fled,
No one knows whither ; and if he had not,
His claims alone were too contemptible
To stand. — Why do you smile ?

Ulr. At your vain fears :
A poor man almost in his grasp — a child
Of doubtless birth — can startle a grandee !

Stral. All's to be fear'd, where all is to be gain'd.

Ulr. True ; and aught done to save or to obtain it.

Stral. You have harp'd the very string next to my
I may depend upon you ? [heart.

Ulr. 'T were too late
To doubt it.

Stral. Let no foolish pity shake
Your bosom (for the appearance of the man
Is pitiful) — he is a wretch, as likely
To have robb'd me as the fellow more suspected,
Except that circumstance is less against him ;
He being lodged far off, and in a chamber
Without approach to mine ; and, to say truth,
I think too well of blood allied to mine,
To deem he would descend to such an act :
Besides, he was a soldier, and a brave one
Once — though too rash.

Ulr. And they, my lord, we know
By our experience, never plunder till

They knock the brains out first — which makes them
heirs,
Not thieves. The dead, who feel nought, can lose
nothing,
Nor e'er be robb'd: their spoils are a bequest —
No more.

Stral. Go to! you are a wag. But say
I may be sure you'll keep an eye on this man,
And let me know his slightest movement towards
Concealment or escape?

Ulr. You may be sure
You yourself could not watch him more than I
Will be his sentinel.

Stral. By this you make me
Yours, and for ever.

Ulr. Such is my intention. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.

*A Hall in the same Palace, from whence the secret Passage
leads.*

Enter WERNER and GABOR.

Gab. Sir, I have told my tale: if it so please you
To give me refuge for a few hours, well —
If not, I'll try my fortune elsewhere.

Wer. How

Can I, so wretched, give to Misery
A shelter? — wanting such myself as much
As e'er the hunted deer a covert —

Gab. Or
The wounded lion his cool cave. Methinks

You rather look like one would turn at bay,
And rip the hunter's entrails.

Wer.

Ah !

Gab.

I care not

If it be so, being much disposed to do
The same myself. But will you shelter me ?
I am oppress'd like you — and poor like you —
Disgraced —

Wer. (abruptly). Who told you that I was disgraced ?

Gab. No one ; nor did I say *you* were so : with
Your poverty my likeness ended ; but
I said *I* was so — and would add, with truth,
As undeservedly as *you*.

Wer.

Again !

As *I* ?

Gab. Or other honest man.

What the devil would you have ? You don't believe me,
Guilty of this base theft ?

Wer.

No, no — I cannot.

Gab. Why that's my heart of honour ! you young
gallant —

Your miserly intendant and dense noble —
All — all suspected me ; and why ? because
I am the worst clothed, and least named amongst them ;
Although, were Momus' lattice in your breasts,
My soul might brook to open it more widely
Than theirs : but thus it is — you poor and helpless —
Both still more than myself.

Wer.

How know you that ?

Gab. You're right : I ask for shelter at the hand
Which I call helpless ; if you now deny it,
I were well paid. But you, who seem to have proved
The wholesome bitterness of life, know well,
By sympathy, that all the outspread gold
Of the New World the Spaniard boasts about
Could never tempt the man who knows its worth

Weigh'd at its proper value in the balance,
Save in such guise (and there I grant its power,
Because I feel it,) as may leave no nightmare
Upon his heart o' nights.

Wer. What do you mean?

Gab. Just what I say; I thought my speech was
plain:

You are no thief — nor I — and, as true men,
Should aid each other.

Wer. It is a damn'd world, sir.

Gab. So is the nearest of the two next, as
The priests say (and no doubt they should know best),
Therefore I'll stick by this — as being loth
To suffer martyrdom, at least with such
An epitaph as larceny upon my tomb.
It is but a night's lodging which I crave;
To-morrow I will try the waters, as
The dove did, trusting that they have abated.

Wer. Abated? Is there hope of that?

Gab. There was
At noontide.

Wer. Then we may be safe,

Gab. Are you
In peril?

Wer. Poverty is ever so.

Gab. That I know by long practice. Will you not
Promise to make mine less?

Wer. Your poverty?

Gab. No — you don't look a leech for that disorder;
I meant my peril only: you've a roof,
And I have none; I merely seek a covert.

Wer. Rightly; for how should such a wretch as I
Have gold?

Gab. Scarce honestly, to say the truth on't,
Although I almost wish you had the baron's.

Wer. Dare you insinuate?

Gab.

What ?

Wer.

Are you aware

To whom you speak ?

Gab.

No ; and I am not used
Greatly to care. (*A noise heard without.*) But hark !
they come !

Wer.

Who come ?

Gab. The intendant and his man-hounds after me :
I 'd face them — but it were in vain to expect
Justice at hands like theirs. Where shall I go ?
But show me any place. I do assure you,
If there be faith in man, I am most guiltless :
Think if it were your own case !

Wer. (*Aside.*)

Oh, just God !

Thy hell is not hereafter ! Am I dust still ?

Gab. I see you're moved ; and it shows well in
you :

I may live to requite it.

Wer.

Are you not

A spy of Stralenheim's ?

Gab.

Not I ! and if

I were, what is there to espy in you ?

Although I recollect his frequent question
About you and your spouse might lead to some
Suspicion ; but you best know — what — and why.
I am his deadliest foe.

Wer.

¶ You ?

Gab.

After such

A treatment for the service which in part

I render'd him, I am his enemy :

If you are not his friend, you will assist me.

Wer. I will.

Gab.

But how ?

Wer. (*showing the panel*). There is a secret spring :
Remember, I discover'd it by chance,
And used it but for safety.

Enter IDENSTEIN and Others.

Iden. Is he not here? He must have vanished then
Through the dim Gothic glass by pious aid
Of pictured saints upon the red and yellow
Casements, through which the sunset streams like sun-
rise

On long pearl-colour'd beards and crimson crosses,
And gilded crosiers, and cross'd arms, and cowls,
And helms, and twisted armour, and long swords,
All the fantastic furniture of windows
Dim with brave knights and holy hermits, whose
Likeness and fame alike rest in some panes
Of crystal, which each rattling wind proclaims
As frail as any other life or glory.

He's gone, however.

Wer. Whom do you seek?

Iden. A villain.

Wer. Why need you come so far, then?

Iden. In the search

Of him who robb'd the baron.

Wer. Are you sure

You have divined the man?

Iden. As sure as you

Stand there: but where's he gone?

Wer. Who?

Iden. He we sought.

Wer. You see he is not here.

Iden. And yet we traced him

Up to this hall. Are you accomplices?

Or deal you in the black art?

Wer. I deal plainly,

To many men the blackest.

Iden. It may be

I have a question or two for yourself

Hereafter; but we must continue now

Our search for t'other.

Wer. • You had best begin
Your inquisition now : I may not be
So patient always.

Iden. I should like to know,
In good sooth, if you really are the man
That Stralenheim's in quest of.

Wer. Insolent !
Said you not that he was not here ?

Iden. Yes, one ;
But there's another whom he tracks more keenly,
And soon, it may be, with authority
Both paramount to his and mine. But, come !
Bustle, my boys ! we are at fault.

[*Exit IDENSTEIN and Attendants.*]

Wer. In what
A maze hath my dim destiny involved me !
And one base sin hath done me less ill than
The leaving undone one far greater. Down,
Thou busy devil, rising in my heart !
Thou art too late ! I'll nought to do with blood.

Enter ULRIC.

Ulr. I sought you, father.

Wer. Is 't not dangerous ?

Ulr. No ; Stralenheim is ignorant of all
Or any of the ties between us : more —
He sends me here a spy upon your actions,
Deeming me wholly his.

Wer. I cannot think it :
'Tis but a snare he winds about us both,
To swoop the sire and son at once.

Ulr. I cannot
Pause in each petty fear, and stumble at
The doubts that rise like briars in our path,
But must break through them, as an unarm'd carle
Would, though with naked limbs, were the wolf rustling

And horses to pursue your route at sunrise,
 'Togethor with my mother.

Wer.

And leave you,

So lately found, in peril too?

Ulr.

Fear nothing!

The only fear were if we fled together,
 For that would make our ties beyond all doubt.
 The waters only lie in flood between
 This burgh and Frankfort; so far 's in our favour.
 The route on to Bohemia, though encumber'd,
 Is not impassable; and when you gain
 A few hours' start, the difficulties will be
 The same to your pursuers. Once beyond
 The frontier, and you're safe.

Wer.

My noble boy!

Ulr. Hush! hush! no transports: we'll indulge in
 them

In Castle Siegendorf! Display no gold!
 Show Idenstein the gem (I know the man,
 And have look'd through him): it will answer thus
 A double purpose. Stralenheim lost *gold* —
 No jewel: therefore it could not be his;
 And then the man who was possess of this
 Can hardly be suspected of abstracting
 The baron's coin, when he could thus convert
 This ring to more than Stralenheim has lost
 By his last night's slumber. Be not over timid
 In your address, nor yet too arrogant,
 And Idenstein will serve you.

Wer.

I will follow

In all things your direction.

Ulr.

I would have

Spared you the trouble; but had I appear'd
 To take an interest in you, and still more
 By dabbling with a jewel in your favour,
 All had been known at once.

Wern. My guardian angel !
This overpays the past. But how wilt thou
Fare in our absence ?

Ulr. Stralenheim knows nothing
Of me as aught of kindred with yourself.
I will but wait a day or two with him
To hush all doubts, and then rejoin my father.

Wern. To part no more !

Ulr. I know not that ; but at
The least we 'll meet again once more.

Wern. My boy ?
My friend ! my only child, and sole preserver !
Oh, do not hate me !

Ulr. Hate my father !

Wern. Ay,
My father hated me. Why not my son ?

Ulr. Your father knew you not as I do.

Wern. Scorpion
Are in thy words ! Thou know me ? in this guise
Thou canst not know me, I am not myself ;
Yet (hate me not) I will be soon.

Ulr. I 'll wait !
In the mean time be sure that all a son
Can do for parents shall be done for mine.

Wern. I see it, and I feel it ; yet I feel
Further — that you despise me. Wherefore should I ?

Ulr. Must I repeat my humiliation ?

Ulr. No !

I have fathom'd it and you. But let us talk
Of this no more. Or if it must be ever,
Not now. Your error has redoubled all
The present difficulties of our house,
At secret war with that of Stralenheim.
All we have now to think of is to baffle
Him. I have shown *one* way.

Wer. The only one,
And I embrace it, as I did my son,
Who show'd *himself* and father's *safety* in
One day.

Ulr. You shall be safe ; let that suffice.
Would Stralenheim's appearance in Bohemia
Disturb your right, or mine, if once we were
Admitted to our lands ?

Wer. Assuredly,
Situate as we are now, although the first
Possessor might, as usual, prove the strongest,
Especially the next in blood.

Ulr. *Blood ! 't is*
A word of many meanings ; in the veins,
And out of them, it is a different thing —
And so it should be, when the same in blood
(As it is call'd) are aliens to each other,
Like Theban brethren : when a part is bad,
A few spilt ounces purify the rest.

Wer. I do not apprehend you.

Ulr. That may be —
And should, perhaps — and yet — but get ye ready ;
You and my mother must away to-night.
Here comes the intendant : sound him with the gem ;
'Twill sink into his venal soul like lead
Into the deep, and bring up slime and mud,
And ooze too, from the bottom, as the lead doth
With its greased understratum ; but no less
Will serve to warn our vessels through these shoals.
The freight is rich, so heave the line in time !
Farewell ! I scarce have time, but yet your *hand*,
My father ! —

Wer. Let me embrace thee !

Ulr. We may be
Observed : subdue your nature to the hour !
Keep off from me as from your foe !

Wer. Accursed
 Be he who is the stifling cause which smothereth
 The best and sweetest feeling of our hearts ;
 At such an hour too !

Ulr. Yes, curse — it will ease you !
 Here is the intendant.

Enter IDENSTEIN.

Master Idenstein,
 How fare you in your purpose ? Have you caught
 The rogue ?

Iden. No, faith !

Ulr. Well, there are plenty more ;
 You may have better luck another chase.
 Where is the baron ?

Iden. Gone back to his chamber ;
 And now I think on't, asking after you
 With nobly-born impatience.

Ulr. Your great men
 Must be answer'd on the instant, as the bound
 Of the stung steed replies unto the spur :
 'Tis well they have horses, too ; for if they had not,
 I fear that men must draw their chariots, as
 They say kings did Sesostris.

Iden. Who was he ?

Ulr. An old Bohemian — an imperial gipsy.

Iden. A gipsy or Bohemian, 't is the same,
 For they pass by both names. And was he one ?

Ulr. I've heard so ; but I must take leave. In-
 tendant,
 Your servant ! — Werner (*to WERNER slightly*), if that
 be your name,

Yours, [*Exit ULRIC.*]

Iden. A well-spoken, pretty-faced young man !
 And prettily behaved ! He knows his station,

You see, sir : how he gave to each his due
Precedence !

Wer. I perceived it, and applaud
His just discernment and your own.

Iden. That 's well —
That 's very well. You also know your place, too ;
And yet I don't know that I know your place.

Wer. (*showing the ring*). Would this assist your
knowledge ?

Iden. How ! — What ! — Eh !
A jewel !

Wer. 'Tis your own on one condition.

Iden. Mine ! — Name it !

Wer. That hereafter you permit me
At thrice its value to redeem it : 't is
A family ring.

Iden. A family ! — *yours* ! — a gem !
I 'm breathless !

Wer. You must also furnish me,
An hour ere daybreak, with all means to quit
This place.

Iden. But is it real ? Let me look on it :
Diamond, by all that 's glorious !

Wer. Come, I 'll trust you :
You have guess'd, no doubt, that I was born above
My present seeming.

Iden. I can't say I did,
Though this looks like it : this is the true breeding
Of gentle blood !

Wer. I have important reasons
For wishing to continue privily
My journey hence.

Iden. So then *you are* the man
Whom Stralenheim's in quest of ?

Wer. I am not ;
But being taken for him might conduct

So much embarrassment to me just now,
And to the baron's self hereafter — 't is
To spare both that I would avoid all bustle.

Iden. Be you the man or no, 't is not my business ;
Besides, I never should obtain the half
From this proud, niggardly noble, who would raise
The country for some missing bits of coin,
And never offer a precise reward —
But *this* ! — another look !

Wer. Gaze on it freely ;
At day-dawn it is yours.

Iden. Oh, thou sweet sparkler !
Thou more than stone of the philosopher !
Thou touchstone of Philosophy herself !
Thou bright eye of the Mine ! thou loadstar of
The soul ! the true magnetic Pole to which
All hearts point duly north, like trembling needles !
Thou flaming Spirit of the Earth ! which, sitting
High on the monarch's diadem, attractest
More worship than the majesty who sweats
Beneath the crown which makes his head ache, like
Millions of hearts which bleed to lend it lustre !
Shalt thou be mine ? I am, methinks, already
A little king, a lucky alchymist ! —
A wise magician, who has bound the devil
Without the forfeit of his soul. But come,
Werner, or what else ?

Wer. Call me Werner still ;
You may yet know me by a loftier title.

Iden. I do believe in thee ! thou art the spirit
Of whom I long have dream'd in a low garb. —
But come, I'll serve thee ; thou shalt be as free
As air despite the waters ; let us hence :
I'll show thee I am honest — (oh, thou jewel !)
Thou shalt be furnish'd, Werner, with such means
Of flight, that if thou wert a snail, not birds

Should overtake thee. — Let me gaze again !
 I have a foster-brother in the mart
 Of Hamburgh skill'd in precious stones. How many
 Carats may it weigh ? — Come, Werner, I will wing
 thee. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

STRALENHEIM's Chamber.

STRALENHEIM and FRITZ.

Fritz. All's ready, my good lord !

Stral. I am not sleepy,

And yet I must to bed : I fain would say
 To rest, but something heavy on my spirit,
 Too dull for wakefulness, too quick for slumber,
 Sits on me as a cloud along the sky,
 Which will not let the sunbeams through, nor yet
 Descend in rain and end, but spreads itself
 'Twixt earth and heaven, like envy between man
 And man, an everlasting mist : — I will
 Unto my pillow.

Fritz. May you rest there well !

Stral. I feel, and fear, I shall.

Fritz. And wherefore fear ?

Stral. I know not why, and therefore do fear more,
 Because an undescribable — but 't is
 All folly. Were the locks (as I desired)
 Changed, to-day, of this chamber ? for last night's
 Adventure makes it needful.

Fritz. Certainly,
 According to your order, and beneath
 The inspection of myself and the young Saxon
 Who saved your life. I think they call him "Ulric."

Stral. You think ! you supercilious slave ! what right

And o'er my steps — and knock'd my head against
Some fifty buttresses — and roused the rats
And bats in general insurrection, till
Their cursed pattering feet and whirling wings
Leave me scarce hearing for another sound.
A light ! It is at distance (if I can
Measure in darkness distance) : but it blinks
As through a crevice or a key-hole, in
The inhibited direction : I must on,
Nevertheless, from curiosity.
A distant lamp-light is an incident
In such a den as this. Pray Heaven it lead me
To nothing that may tempt me ! Else — Heaven aid
me

To obtain or to escape it ! Shining still !
Were it the star of Lucifer himself,
Or he himself girt with its beams, I could
Contain no longer. Softly ! mighty well !
That corner's turn'd — so — ah ! no ; — right ! it draws
Nearer. Here is a darksome angle — so,
That's weather'd. — Let me pause. — Suppose it leads
Into some greater danger than that which
I have escaped — no matter, 't is a new one ;
And novel perils, like fresh mistresses,
Wear more magnetic aspects : — I will on,
And be it where it may — I have my dagger
Which may protect me at a pinch. — Burn still,
Thou little light ! Thou art my *ignis fatuus* !
My stationary Will-o'-the-wisp ! — So ! so !
He hears my invocation, and fails not.

[*The scene closes.*

SCENE IV.

*A Garden.**Enter WERNER.*

I could not sleep — and now the hour 's at hand ;
 All 's ready. Idenstein has kept his word ;
 And station'd in the outskirts of the town,
 Upon the forest's edge, the vehicle
 Awaits us. Now the dwindling stars begin
 To pale in heaven ; and for the last time I
 Look on these horrible walls. Oh ! never, never
 Shall I forget them. Here I came most poor,
 But not dishonour'd : and I leave them with
 A stain, — if not upon my name, yet in
 My heart ! — a never-dying canker-worm,
 Which all the coming splendour of the lands,
 And rights, and sovereignty of Siegendorf
 Can scarcely lull a moment. I must find
 Some means of restitution, which would ease
 My soul in part : but how without discovery ? —
 It must be done, however ; and I 'll pause
 Upon the method the first hour of safety
 The madness of my misery led to this
 Base infamy ; repentance must retrieve it :
 I will have nought of Stralenheim's upon
 My spirit, though he would grasp all of mine ;
 Lands, freedom, life, — and yet he sleeps as soundly,
 Perhaps, as infancy, with gorgeous curtains
 Spread for his canopy, o'er silken pillows,
 Such as when —— Hark ! what noise is that ? Again
 The branches shake ; and some loose stones have fallen
 From yonder terrace.

[ULRIC leaps down from the terracc.

Ulric ! ever welcome !

Thrice welcome now ! this filial ——

- Ulr.* Stop! Before
 We approach, tell me —
Wer. Why look you so?
Ulr. Do I
 Behold my father, or —
Wer. What?
Ulr. An assassin?
Wer. Insane or insolent!
Ulr. Reply, sir, as
 You prize your life, or mine!
Wer. To what must I
 Answer?
Ulr. Are you or are you not the assassin
 Of Stralenheim?
Wer. I never was as yet
 The murderer of any man. What mean you?
Ulr. Did not you *this* night (as the night before)
 Retrace the secret passage? Did you not
 Again revisit Stralenheim's chamber? and —
 [ULRIC pauses.
Wer. Proceed.
Ulr. Died he not by your hand?
Wer. Great God!
Ulr. You are innocent, then! my father's innocent!
 Embrace me! Yes, — your tone — your look — yes,
 yes, —
 Yet say so.
Wer. If I e'er, in heart or mind,
 Conceived deliberately such a thought,
 But rather strove to trample back to hell
 Such thoughts — if e'er they glared a moment through
 The irritation of my oppressed spirit —
 May heaven be shut for ever from my hopes,
 As from mine eyes!
Ulr. But Stralenheim is dead.

Wer. 'T is horrible ! 't is hideous, as 't is hateful ! —
But what have I to do with this ?

Ulr. No bolt
Is forced ; no violence can be detected,
Save on his body. Part of his own household
Have been alarm'd ; but as the intendant is
Absent, I took upon myself the care
Of mustering the police. His chamber has,
Past doubt, been enter'd secretly. Excuse me,
If nature ——

Wer. Oh, my boy ! what unknown woes
Of dark fatality, like clouds, are gathering
Above our house !

Ulr. My father ! I acquit you !
But will the world do so ? will even the judge,
If —— But you must away this instant.

Wer. No !
I'll face it. Who shall dare suspect me ?

Ulr. Yet
You had no guests — no visitors — no life
Breathing around you, save my mother's ?

Wer. Ah !
The Hungarian !

Ulr. He is gone ! he disappear'd
Ere sunset.

Wer. No ; I hid him in that very
Conceal'd and fatal gallery.

Ulr. There I'll find him.

[ULRIC is going.]

Wer. It is too late : he had left the palace ere
I quitted it. I found the secret panel
Open, and the doors which lead from that hall
Which masks it : I but thought he had snatch'd the
And favourable moment to escape [silent
The myrmidons of Idenstein, who were
Dogging him yester-even.

Ulr. You reclosed
The panel?

Wer. Yes; and not without reproach
(And inner trembling for the avoided peril)
At his dull heedlessness, in leaving thus
His shelterer's asylum to the risk
Of a discovery.

Ulr. You are sure you closed it?

Wer. Certain.

Ulr. That's well; but had been better, if
You ne'er had turn'd it to a den for — [*He pauses.*

Wer. Thieves!
Thou wouldst say: I must bear it, and deserve it;
But not —

Ulr. No, father; do not speak of this
This is no hour to think of petty crimes,
But to prevent the consequence of great ones.
Why would you shelter this man?

Wer. • Could I shun it?
A man pursued by my chief foe; disgraced
For my own crime; a victim to my safety,
Imploring a few hours' concealment from
The very wretch who was the cause he needed
Such refuge. Had he been a wolf, I could not
Have in such circumstances thrust him forth.

Ulr. And like the wolf he hath repaid you. But
It is too late to ponder thus: — you must
Set out ere dawn. I will remain here to
Trace the murderer, if 't is possible.

Wer. But this my sudden flight will give the Moloch
Suspicion: two new victims in the lieu
Of one, if I remain. The fled Hungarian,
Who seems the culprit, and —

Ulr. Who seems? Who else
Can be so?

Wer. Not *I*, though just now you doubted —
You, my son! — doubted —

Ulr. And do you doubt of him
The fugitive?

Wer. Boy! since I fell into
The abyss of crime (though not of *such* crime), I,
Having seen the innocent oppress'd for me,
May doubt even of the guilty's guilt. Your heart
Is free, and quick with virtuous wrath to accuse
Appearances; and views a criminal
In Innocence's shadow, it may be,
Because 't is dusky.

Ulr. And if I do so,
What will mankind, who know you not, or knew
But to oppress? You must not stand the hazard.
Away! — I'll make all easy. Idenstein
Will for his own sake and his jewel's hold
His peace — he also is a partner in
Your flight — moreover —

Wer. Fly! and leave my name
Link'd with the Hungarian's, or preferr'd as poorest,
To bear the brand of bloodshed?

Ulr. Pshaw! leave any thing
Except our fathers' sovereignty and castles,
For which you have so long panted and in vain!
What name? You have *no name*, since that you bear
Is feign'd.

Wer. Most true: but still I would not have it
Engraved in crimson in men's memories,
Though in this most obscure abode of men —
Besides, the search —

Ulr. I will provide against
Aught that can touch you. No one knows you here
As heir of Siegendorf: if Idenstein
Suspects, 't is *but suspicion*, and he is
A fool: his folly shall have such employment,

Too, that the unknown Werner shall give way.
To nearer thoughts of self. The laws (if e'er
Laws reach'd this village) are all in abeyance
With the late general war of thirty years,
Or crush'd, or rising slowly from the dust,
To which the march of armies trampled them.
Stralenheim, although noble, is unheeded
Here, save as *such* — without lands, influence,
Save what hath perish'd with him. Few prolong
A week beyond their funeral rites their sway
O'er men, unless by relatives, whose interest
Is roused: such is not here the case; he died
Alone, unknown, — a solitary grave,
Obscure as his deserts, without a scutcheon,
Is all he 'll have, or wants. If I discover
The assassin, 't will be well — if not, believe me,
None else; though all the full-fed train of menials
May howl above his ashes (as they did
Around him in his danger on the Oder),
Will no more stir a finger *now* than *then*.
Hence! hence! I must not hear your answer. — Look!
'The stars are almost faded, and the grey
Begins to grizzle the black air of night.
You shall not answer: — Pardon me that I
Am peremptory; 't is your son that speaks,
Your long-lost, late-found son. — Let's call my mother!
Softly and swiftly step, and leave the rest
To me: I 'll answer for the event as far
As regards *you*, and that is the chief point,
As my first duty, which shall be observed.
We'll meet in Castle Siegendorf — once more
Our banners shall be glorious! Think of that
Alone, and leave all other thoughts to me,
Whose youth may better battle with them. — Hence!
And may your age be happy! — I will kiss [you!
My mother once more, then Heaven's speed be with

Wer. This counsel 's safe — but is it honourable ?

Ulr. To save a father is a child's chief honour.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A Gothic Hall in the Castle of Siegendorf, near Prague.

Enter ERIC and HENRICK, Retainers of the Count.

Eric. So better times are come at last ; to these
Old walls new masters and high wassail — both
A long desideratum.

Hen. Yes, for *masters*,
It might be unto these who long for novelty,
Though made by a new grave : but as for wassail,
Methinks the old Count Siegendorf maintain'd
His feudal hospitality as high,
As e'er another prince of the empire.

Eric. Why
For the mere cup and trencher, we no doubt
Fared passing well ; but as for merriment
And sport, without which salt and sauces season
The cheer but scantily, our sizings were
Even of the narrowest.

Hen. The old count loved not
The roar of revel ; are you sure that *this* does ?

Eric. As yet he hath been courteous as he's boun-
teous,
And we all love him.

Hen. His reign is as yet
Hardly a year o'erpast its honey-moon,

And the first year of sovereigns is bridal :
 Anom, we shall perceive his real sway
 And moods of mind.

Eric. Pray Heaven he keep the present !
 Then his brave son, Count Ulric — there 's a knight !
 Pity the wars are o'er ! •

Hen. Why so ?

Eric. Look on him !
 And answer that yourself.

Hen. He 's very youthful,
 And strong and beautiful as a young tiger.

Eric. That 's not a faithful vassal's likeness.

Hen. But
 Perhaps a true one.

Eric. Pity, as I said,
 The wars are over : in the hall, who like
 Count Ulric for a well-supported pride,
 Which awes, but yet offends not ? in the field,
 Who like him with his spear in hand, when, gnashing
 His tusks, and ripping up from right to left
 The howling hounds, the boar makes for the thicket ?
 Who backs a horse, or bears a hawk, or wears
 A sword like him ? Whose plume nods knightlier ?

Hen. No one's, I grant you. Do not fear, if war
 Be long in coming, he is of that kind
 Will make it for himself, if he hath not
 Already done as much.

Eric. What do you mean ?

Hen. You can't deny his train of followers
 (But few our native fellow vassals born
 On the domain) are such a sort of knaves
 As — (Pauses.)

Eric. • What ?

Hen. The war (you love so much) leaves living.
 Like other parents, she spoils her worst children.

Eric. 'Nonsense ! they are all brave non-visaged fellows,
Such as old Tilly loved.

Hen. ' And who loved Tilly ?
' Ask that at Magdebourg — or for that matter
Wallenstein either ; — they are gone to —

Eric. Rest !
But what beyond 't is not ours to pronounce.

Hen. I wish they had left us something of their rest :
The country (nominally now at peace)
Is over-run with — God knows who : they fly
By night, and disappear with sunrise ; but
Leave us no less desolation, nay, even more,
Than the most *open* warfare.

Eric. But Count Ulric —
What has all this to do with him ?

Hen. With him !
He — might prevent it. As you say he's fond
Of war, why makes he it not on those marauders ?

Eric. You 'd better ask himself.

Hen. I would as soon
Ask the lion why he laps not 'milk.

Eric. And here he comes !

Hen. The devil ! you 'll hold your tongue ?

Eric. Why do you turn so pale ?

Hen. 'T is nothing — but
Be silent.

Eric. I will, upon what you have said.

Hen. I assure you I meant nothing, — a mere sport
Of words, no more ; besides, had it been otherwise,
He is to espouse the gentle Baroness
Ida of Stralenheim, the late baron's heiress ;
And she, no doubt, will soften whatsoever
Of fierceness the late long intestine wars
Have given all natures, and most unto those
Who were born in them, and bred up upon

- The knees of Homicide ; sprinkled, as it were,
With blood even at their baptism. Prithee, peace
On all that I have said !

Enter ULRIC and RODOLPH.

• Good morrow, count.
Ulr. Good morrow, worthy Henrick. Eric[•] is
All ready for the chase ?

Eric. The dogs are order'd
Down to the forest, and the vassals out
To beat the bushes, and the day looks promising.
Shall I call forth your excellency's suite ?
What courser will you please to mount ?

Ulr. • The dun,
Walstein.

Eric. I fear he scarcely has recover'd
• The toils of Monday : 't was a noble chase :
You spear'd four with your own hand.

Ulr. • True, good Eric ;
• I had forgotten — let it be the grey, then,
Old Ziska : he has not been out this fortnight.

Eric. He shall be straight caparison'd. How many
Of your immediate retainers shall •
Escort you ?

Ulr. I leave that to Weilburgh, our
Master of the horse. [*Exit ERIC.*

Rodolph !

Rod. • My lord !

Ulr. • The news
Is awkward from the — (*RODOLPH points to HENRICK.*)
How now, Henrick ? why

Loiter you here ?

Hen. For your commands, my lord.

• *Ulr.* Go to my father, and present my duty,
And learn if he would aught with me before
I mount. • [*Exit HENRICK.*

Rodolph, our friends have had a check
Upon the frontiers of Franconia, and

'Tis rumour'd that the column sent against them
Is to be strengthen'd. I must join them soon.

Rod. Best wait for further and more sure advices.

Ulr. I mean it — and indeed it could not well
Have fallen out at a time more opposite
To all my plans.

Rod. It will be difficult
To excuse your absence to the count your father.

Ulr. Yes, but the unsettled state of our domain
In high Silesia will permit and cover
My journey. In the mean time, when we are
Engaged in the chase, draw off the eighty men
Whom Wolffe leads — keep the forests on your route:
You know it well?

Rod. As well as on that night
When we ———

Ulr. We will not speak of that until
We can repeat the same with like success:
And when you have join'd, give Rosenberg this letter.

[Gives a letter]
Add further, that I have sent this slight addition
To our force with you and Wolffe, as herald of
My coming, though I could but spare them ill
At this time, as my father loves to keep
Full numbers of retainers round the castle,
Until this marriage, and its feasts and fooleries,
Are rung out with its peal of nuptial nonsense.

Rod. I thought you loved the lady Ida?

Ulr. Why,

I do so — but it follows not from that
I would bind in my youth and glorious years,
So brief and burning, with a lady's zone,
Although 't were that of Venus: — but I love her,
As woman should be loved, fairly and solely.

Rod. And constantly?

Ulr. I think so; for I love
Nought else. — But I have not the time to pause
Upon these gewgaws of the heart. Great things
We have to do ere long. Speed! speed! good Rodolph!

Rod. On my return, however, I shall find
The Baroness Ida lost in Countess Siegendorf?

Ulr. Perhaps my father wishes it; and sooth
'Tis no bad policy: this union with
The last bud of the rival branch at once
Unites the future and destroys the past.

Rod. Adieu.

Ulr. Yet hold — we had better keep together
Until the chase begins; then draw thou off,
And do as I have said.

Rod. I will. But to
return — 't was a most kind act in the count
Your father to send up to Königsberg
For this fair orphan of the baron, and
To hail her as his daughter.

Ulr. Wondrous kind!
Especially as little kindness till
Then grew between them.

Rod. The late baron died
Of a fever, did he not?

Ulr. How should I know?

Rod. I have heard it whisper'd there was something
strange
About his death — and even the place of it
Is scarcely known.

Ulr. Some obscure village on
The Saxon or Silesian frontier.

Rod. He
Has left no testament — no farewell words?

Ulr. I am neither confessor nor notary,
So cannot say.

Rod. Ah! here's the lady Ida.

*Enter IDA STRALENHEIM.*¹

Ulr. You are early, my sweet cousin!

Ida. Not too early,

* Dear Ulr, if I do not interrupt you.

Why do you call me "*cousin*?"

Ulr. (smiling). Are we not so?

Ida. Yes, but I do not like the name; methinks
It sounds so cold, as if you thought upon
Our pedigree, and only weigh'd our blood.

Ulr. (starting). Blood!

Ida. Why does yours start from your cheeks?

Ulr. Ay! doth it?

Ida. It doth — but no! it rushes like a torrent
Even to your brow again.

Ulr. (recovering himself). And if it fled,
It only was because your presence sent it
Back to my heart, which beats for you, sweet cousin!

Ida. "Cousin" again.

Ulr. Nay, then, I'll call you sister.

Ida. I like that name still worse. — Would we had
ne'er

Been aught of kindred!

Ulr. (gloomily). Would we never had!

Ida. Oh, heavens! and can you wish that?

Ulr. Dearest Ida!

Did I not echo your own wish?

Ida. Yes, Ulr,

But then I wish'd it not with such a glance,
And scarce knew what I said; but let me be

¹ [Ida, the new personage, is a precocious girl of fifteen, in a great hurry to be married; and who has very little to do in the business of the play, but to produce an effect by fainting at the discovery of the villainy of her beloved, and partially touching on it in a previous scene. — ECL. REV.]

Sister, or cousin, what you will, so that
I still to you am something.

Ulr. You shall be
All — all —

Ida. And you to me are so already ;
But I can wait.

Ulr. Dear Ida !

Ida. Call me Ida,
Your Ida, for I would be yours, none else's —
Indeed I have none else left, since my poor father —
[*She pauses.*

Ulr. You have mine — you have me.

Ida. Dear Ulric, how I wish
My father could but view my happiness,
Which wants but this !

Ulr. Indeed !

Ida. You would have loved him,
He you ; for the brave ever love each other :
His manner was a little cold, his spirit
Proud (as is birth's prerogative) ; but under
This grave exterior — Would you had known each
Had such as you been near him on his journey, [other !
He had not died without a friend to soothe
His last and lonely moments.

Ulr. Who says that ?

Ida. What ?

Ulr. That he died alone.

Ida. The general rumour,
And disappearance of his servants, who
Have ne'er return'd : that fever was most deadly
Which swept them all away.

Ulr. If they were near him,
He could not die neglected or alone.

Ida. Alas ! what is a menial to a death-bed,
When the dim eye rolls vainly round for what
It loves ? — They say he died of a fever.

Ulr.

Say !

It was so.

Ida. I sometimes dream otherwise.

Ulr. All dreams are false.

Ida.

And yet I see him as

I see you.

Ulr. Where?

Ida.

In sleep — I see him lie

Pale, bleeding, and a man with a raised knife

Beside him.

Ulr. But you do not see his face ?

Ida (looking at him). No ! Oh, my God ! do you ?

Ulr.

Why do you ask ?

Ida. Because you look as if you saw a murderer !

Ulr. (agitatedly). Ida, this is mere childishness ;

your weakness

Infects me, to my shame : but as all feelings

Of yours are common to me, it affects me.

Prithee, sweet child, change —

Ida.

Child, indeed ! I have

Full fifteen summers !

[A bugle sounds.

Rod.

Hark, my lord, the bugle !

Ida (peevishly to RODOLPH). Why need you tell him
that ? Can he not hear it

Without your echo ?

Rod.

Pardon me, fair baroness !

Ida. I will not pardon you, unless you earn it

By aiding me in my dissuasion of

Count Ulric from the chase to-day.

Rod.

You will not,

Lady, need aid of mine.

Ulr.

I must not now

Forego it.

Ida.

But you shall !

Ulr.

Shall !

Ida.

Yes, or be

No true knight. — Come, dear Ulric! yield to me
In this for this one day: the day looks heavy,
And you are turn'd so pale and ill.

Ulr.

You jest

Ida. Indeed I do not: — ask of Rodolph.

Rod.

Truly

My lord, within this quarter of an hour
You have changed more than e'er I saw you change
In years.

Ulr. 'Tis nothing; but if 't were, the air
Would soon restore me. I'm the true chameleon,
And live but on the atmosphere; your feasts
In castle halls, and social banquets, nurse not
My spirit — I'm a forester and breather
Of the steep mountain-tops, where I love all
The eagle loves.

Ida.

Except his prey, I hope.

Ulr. Sweet Ida, wish me a fair chase, and I
Will bring you six boars' heads for trophies home.

Ida. And will you not stay, then? You shall not go!
Come! I will sing to you.

Ulr.

Ida, you scarcely

Will make a soldier's wife.

Ida.

I do not wish

To be so; for I trust these wars are over,
And you will live in peace on your domains.

Enter WERNER as COUNT SIEGENDORF.

Ulr. My father, I salute you, and it grieves me
With such brief greeting. — You have heard our bugle;
The vassals wait.

Sieg.

So let them. — You forget

To-morrow is the appointed festival
In Prague for peace restored. You are apt to follow
The chase with such an ardour as will scarce
Permit you to return to-day, or if

Return'd, too much fatigued to join to-morrow
The nobles in our marshall'd ranks.

Ulr.

You, count,

Will well supply the place of both — I am not
A lover of these pageantries.

* *Sieg.*

No, Ulric :

It were not well that you alone of all

Our young nobility —

Ida.

And far the noblest

In aspect and demeanour.

Sieg. (to IDA).

True, dear child,

Though somewhat frankly said for a fair damsel —

But, Ulric, recollect too our position,

So lately reinstated in our honours.

Believe me, 't would be mark'd in any house,

But most in *ours*, that one should be found wanting

At such a time and place. Besides, the Heaven

Which gave us back our own, in the same moment

It spread its peace o'er all, hath double claims

On us for thanksgiving : first, for our country ;

And next, that we are here to share its blessings.

Ulr. (aside). Devout, too ! Well, sir, I obey at
once.

(*Then aloud to a Servant.*)

Ludwig, dismiss the train without ! [*Exit LUDWIG.*]

Ida.

And so

You yield at once to him what I for hours

Might supplicate in vain.

Sieg. (smiling).

You are not jealous

Of me, I trust, my pretty rebel ! who

Would sanction disobedience against all

Except thyself ? But fear not ; thou shalt rule him

Hereafter with a fonder sway and firmer.

Ida. But I should like to govern now.

Sieg.

You shall,

Your harp, which by the way awaits you with

The countess in her chamber. She complains

That you are a sad truant to your music :
She attends you.

Ida. Then good morrow, my kind kinsmen !
Ulric, you 'll come and hear me ?

Ulric. By and by.

Ida. Be sure I 'll sound it better than your bugles ;
'Then pray you be as punctual to its notes :
I 'll play you King Gustavus' march.

Ulric. And why not
Old Tilly's ?

Ida. Not that monster's ! I should think
My harp-strings rang with groans, and not with music,
Could aught of ~~this~~ sound on it : — but come quickly ;
Your mother will be eager to receive you. [*Exit* *IDA*.]

Sieg. Ulric, I wish to speak with you alone.

Ulric. My time's your vassal. —
(*Aside to* *RODOLPH*.) Rodolph, hence ! and do
As I directed : and by his best speed
And readiest means let Rosenberg reply.

Rod. Count Siegendorf, command you aught ? I am
bound
Upon a journey past the frontier.

Sieg. (*starts*). Ah ! —
Where ? on *what* frontier ?

Rod. The Silesian, on
My way — (*Aside to* *ULRIC*.) — *Where* shall I say ?

Ulric. (*aside to* *RODOLPH*.) To Hamburg.
(*Aside to himself.*) That

Word will, I think, put a firm padlock on
His further inquisition.

Rod. Count, to Hamburg.

Sieg. (*agitated*). Hamburg ! No, I have nought to
do there, nor
Am aught connected with that city. Then
God speed you !

Rod. Fare ye well, Count Siegedorf!
[Exit RODOLPH.]

* *Sieg.* Ulric, this man, who has just departed, is
One of those strange companions whom I fain
Would reason with you on.

* *Ulr.* My lord, he is
Noble by birth, of one of the first houses
In Saxony.

Sieg. I talk not of his birth,
But of his bearing. Men speak lightly of him.

Ulr. So they will do of most men. Even the monarch

Is not fenced from his chamberlain's slander, or
The sneer of the last courtier whom he has made
Great and ungrateful.

* *Sieg.* If I must be plain,
The world speaks more than lightly of this Rodolph:
They say he is leagued with the "black bands" who
still

Ravage the frontier.

Ulr. And will you believe
The world?

Sieg. In this case — yes.

Ulr. In any case,
I thought you knew it better than to take
An accusation for a sentence.

Sieg. Son!
I understand you: you refer to — but
My destiny has so involved about me
Her spider web, that I can only flutter
Like the poor fly, but break it not. Take heed,
Ulric; you have seen to what the passions led me:
Twenty long years of misery and famine
Quenched them not — twenty thousand more, perchance,
Hereafter (or even here in moments which
Might date for years) did Anguish make the dial)

May not obliterate or expiate
 The madness and dishonour of an instant.
 Utric, be warn'd by a father! — I was not
 By mine, and you behold me!

Utr. I behold
 The prosperous and beloved Siegendorf,
 Lord of a prince's appanage, and honour'd
 By those he rules and those he ranks with.

Sieg. Ah!
 Why wilt thou call me prosperous, while I fear
 For thee? Beloved, when thou lovest me not!
 All hearts but one may beat in kindness for me —
 But if my son's is cold! —

Utr. Who dare say that?
Sieg. None else but I, who see it — feel it — keener
 Than would your adversary, who dared say so,
 Your sabre in his heart! But mine survives
 The wound.

Utr. You err. My nature is not given
 To outward fondling: how should it be so,
 After twelve years' divorcement from my parents?

Sieg. And did not I too pass those twelve torn years
 In a like absence? But 't is vain to urge you —
 Nature was never call'd back by remonstrance.
 Let's change the theme. I wish you to consider
 That these young violent nobles of high name,
 But dark deeds (ay, the darkest, if all Rumour
 Reports be true), with whom thou consortest,
 Will lead thee —

Utr. (impatiently). I'll be led by no man.
Sieg. Nor
 Be leader of such, I would hope: at once
 To wean thee from the perils of thy youth
 And haughty spirit, I have thought it well
 That thou shouldst wed the lady Ida — more
 As thou appear'st to love her.

Ulr. I have said
I will obey your orders, were they to
Unite with Hecate — can a son say more ?
Sieg. He says too much in saying this. It is not
The nature of thine age, nor of thy blood,
'Nor of thy temperament, to talk so coolly,
Or act so carelessly, in that which is
The bloom or blight of all men's happiness,
(For Glory's pillow is but restless, if
Love lay not down his cheek there): some strong bias,
Some master fiend is in thy service, to
Misrule the mortal who believes him slave,
And makes his every thought subservient ; else
Thou 'dst say at once — " I love young Ida, and
Will wed her ; " or, " I love her not, and all
The powers of earth shall never make me. " — So
Would I have answer'd.

Ulr. Sir, you wed for love.

Sieg. I did, and it has been my only refuge
In many miseries.

Ulr. Which miseries
Had never been but for this love-match.

Sieg. Still
Against your age and nature ! Who at twenty
F'er answer'd thus till now ?

Ulr. Did you not warn me
Against your own example ?

Sieg. Boyish sophist !
In a word, do you love, or love not, Ida ?

Ulr. What matters it, if I am ready to
Obey you in espousing her ?

Sieg. As far
As you feel, nothing, but all life for her.
She's young — all-beautiful — adores you — is
Endow'd with qualities to give happiness,
Such as rounds common life into a dream

Of something which your poets cannot paint,
 And (if it were not wisdom to love virtue)
 For which Philosophy might barter Wisdom ;
 And giving so much happiness, deserves
 A little in return. I would not have her
 Break her heart for a man who has none to break ;
 Or wither on her stalk like some pale rose
 Deserted by the bird she thought a nightingale,
 According to the Orient tale. She is —

Ulr. The daughter of dead Stralenheim, your foe.
 I'll wed her, ne'ertheless ; though, to say truth,
 Just now I am not violently transported
 In favour of such unions.

Sieg. But she loves you.

Ulr. And I love her, and therefore would think
twice.

Sieg. Alas ! Love never *did* so.

Ulr. Then 't is time
 He should begin, and take the bandage from
 His eyes, and look before he leaps ; till now
 He hath ta'en a jump i' the dark.

Sieg. But you consent ?

Ulr. I did, and do.

Sieg. Then fix the day.

Ulr. 'T is usual,

And certes courteous, to leave that to the lady.

Sieg. I will engage for her.

Ulr. So will not I

For any woman : and as what I fix,
 I fain would see unshaken, when she gives
 Her answer, I'll give mine.

Sieg. But 't is your office
 To woo. •

Ulr. Count, 't is a marriage of your making,
 So be it of your wooing ; but to please you,
 I will now pay my duty to my mother,

With whom, you know, the lady Ida is. —
 What would you have? You have forbid my stirring
 For manly sports beyond the castle walls,
 And I obey; you bid me turn a chamberer,
 To pick up gloves, and fans, and knitting-needles,
 And list to songs and tunes, and watch for smiles,
 And smile at pretty prattle, and look into
 The eyes of feminine, as though they were
 The stars receding early to our wish
 Upon the dawn of a world-winning battle —
 What can a son or man do more? [Exit ULRIC.

Sieg. (solus).

Too much! —

Too much of duty, and too little love! —
 He pays me in the coin he owes me not:
 For such hath been my wayward fate, I could not
 Fulfil a parent's duties by his side
 Till now; but love he owes me, for my thoughts
 Ne'er left him, nor my eyes long'd without tears
 To see my child again, and now I have found him!
 But how — obedient, but with coldness; devious
 In my sight, but with carelessness; mysterious —
 Abstracted — distant — much given to long absence,
 And where — none know — in league with the most
 riotous

Of our young nobles; though to do him justice,
 He never stoops down to their vulgar pleasures;
 Yet there's some tie between them which I can not
 Unravel. They look up to him — consult him —
 Throng round him as a leader: but with me
 He hath no confidence! Ah! can I hope it
 After — what! doth my father's curse descend
 Even to my child? Or is the Hungarian near
 To shed more blood? or — Oh! if it should be!
 Spirit of Stralenheim, dost thou walk these walls
 To wither him and his — who, though they slew not,
 Unlatch'd the door of death for thee? 'T was not

Our fault, nor is our sin : thou wert our foe,
And yet I spared thee when my own destruction
Slept with thee, to awake with thine awakening !
And only took — Accursed gold ! thou liest
Like poison in my hands ; I dare not use thee,
Nor part from thee ; thou camest in such a guise,
Methinks thou wouldst contaminate all hands
Like mine. Yet I have done, to atone for thee,
Thou villanous gold ! and thy dead master's doom,
Though he died not by me or mine, as much
As if he were my brother ! I have ta'en
His orphan Ida — cherish'd her as one
Who will be mine.

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Atten. The abbot, if it please
Your excellency, whom you sent for, waits
Upon you. [*Exit ATTENDANT.*]

Enter the PRIOR ALBERT.

Prior. Peace be with these walls, and all
Within them !

Sieg. Welcome, welcome, holy father !
And may thy prayer be heard ! — all men have need
Of such, and I —

Prior. Have the first claim to all
The prayers of our community. Our convent,
Erected by your ancestors, is still
Protected by their children.

Sieg. Yes, good father ;
Continue daily orisons for us
In these dim days of heresies and blood,
Though the schismatic Swede, Gustavus, is
Gone home.

Prior. To the endless home of unbelievers,
Where there is everlasting wail and woe,

Gnashing of teeth, and tears of blood, and fire,
Eternal, and the worm which dieth not!

Sieg. True, father: and to avert those pang^s from
one,

Who, though of our most faultless holy church,
Yet died without its last and dearest offices,
Which smoothe the soul through^l purgatorial pains,
I have to offer humbly this donation
In masses for his spirit.

[*SIEGENDORF offers the gold which he had taken
from STRALENHEIM.*

Prior.

Count, if I

Receive it, 't is because I know too well,
Refusal would offend you. Be assured
The largess shall be only dealt in alms,
And every mass no less sung for the dead.
Our house needs no donations, thanks to yours,
Which has of old endow'd it; but from you
And yours in all meet things 't is fit we obey.
For whom shall mass be said?

Sieg. (*faltering*).

For — for — the dead.

Prior. His name?

Sieg.

'T is from a soul, and not a name,
I would avert perdition.

Prior.

I meant not

To pry into your secret. We will pray
For one unknown, the same as for the proudest.

Sieg. Secret! I have none: but, father, he who's
gone

Might have one; or, in short, he did bequeath —
No, not bequeath — but I bestow this sum
For pious purposes.

Prior.

A proper deed

In the behalf of our departed friends.

Sieg. But he who's gone was not my friend, but foe,
The deadliest and the staunchest.

Prior. Better still!
To employ our means to obtain heaven for the souls
Of our dead enemies is worthy those
Who can forgive them living.

Sieg. But I did not
Forgive this man. I loathed him to the last,
As he did me. I do not love him now,
But ——

Prior. Best of all! for this is pure religion!
You fain would rescue him you hate from hell —
An evangelical compassion — with
Your own gold too!

Sieg. Father, 't is not my gold.

Prior. Whose then? You said it was no legacy.

Sieg. No matter whose — of this be sure, that he
Who own'd it never more will need it, save
In that which it may purchase from your altars:
'T is yours, or theirs.

Prior. Is there no blood upon it?

Sieg. No; but there's worse than blood — eternal
shame!

Prior. Did he who own'd it die in his bed?

Sieg. Alas!
He did.

Prior. Son! you relapse into revenge,
If you regret your enemy's bloodless death.

Sieg. His death was fathomlessly deep in blood.

Prior. You said he died in his bed, not battle.

Sieg. He
Died, I scarce know — but — he was stabb'd i' the dark,
And now you have it — perish'd on his pillow
By a cut-throat! — Ay! — you may look upon me!
I am not the man. I'll meet your eye on that point,
As I can one day God's.

Prior. Nor did he die
By means, or men, or instrument of yours?

Sieg. No! by the God who sees and strikes!

Prior. Nor know you

Who slew him?

Sieg. I could only guess at *one*,

And he to me a stranger, unconnected,

As unemploy'd. Except by one day's knowledge,

I never saw the man who was suspected.

Prior. Then you are free from guilt.

Sieg. (eagerly). Oh! am I? — say!

Prior. You have said so, and know best.

Sieg. Father! I have spoken

The truth, and nought but truth, if *not* the *whole*,

Yet say I am *not* guilty! for the blood

Of this man weighs on me, as if I shed it,

Though, by the Power who abhorreth human blood,

I did not! — nay, once spared it, when I might

And *could* — ay, perhaps, *should* (if our self-safety

Be e'er excusable in such defences

Against the attacks of over-potent foes):

But pray for him, for me, and all my house;

For, as I said, though I be innocent,

I know not why, a like remorse is on me,

As if he had fallen by me or mine. Pray for me,

Father! I have pray'd myself in vain.

Prior. I will.

Be comforted! You are innocent, and should

Be calm as innocence.

Sieg. But calmness is not

Always the attribute of innocence.

I feel it is not.

Prior. But it will be so,

When the mind gathers up its truth within it.

Remember the great festival to-morrow,

In which you rank amidst our chiefest nobles,

As well as your brave son; and smooth your aspect,

Nor in the general vision of thanks

For bloodshed stopt, let blood you shed not wise
 A cloud upon your thoughts. This were to be
 Too sensitive. Take comfort, and forget
 Such things, and leave remorse unto the guilty.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A large and magnificent Gothic Hall in the Castle of Siegendorf, decorated with Trophies, Banners, and Arms of that Family.

Enter ARNHEIM and MEISTER, attendants of COUNT SIEGENDORF.

Arn. Be quick! the count will soon return: the ladies

Already are at the portal. Have you sent
 The messengers in search of him he seeks for?

Meis. I have, in all directions, over Prague,
 As far as the man's dress and figure could
 By your description track him. The devil take
 These revels and processions! All the pleasure
 (If such there be) must fall to the spectators.
Arn. I'm sure none doth to us who make the show.

Arn. Go to! my lady countess comes.

Meis. I'd rather
 Ride a day's hunting on an outworn jade,
 Than follow in the train of a great man,
 In these dull pageantries.

Arn. Begone! and rail
 Within.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter the COUNTESS JOSEPHINE SIEGENDORF *and* IDA STRALENHEIM.

'*Jos.* Well, Heaven be praised ! the show is over.

Ida. How can you say so ? Never have I dreamt
Of aught so beautiful. The flowers, the boughs,
The banners, and the nobles, and the knights,
The gems, the robes, the plumes, the happy faces,
The coursers, and the incense, and the sun
Streaming through the stain'd windows, even the *tombs*,
Which look'd so calm, and the celestial hymns,
Which seem'd as if they rather came from heaven
Than mounted there. The bursting organ's peal
Rolling on high like an harmonious thunder ;
The white robes and the lifted eyes ; the world
At peace ! and all at peace with one another !
Oh, my sweet mother ! *[Embracing JOSEPHINE.*

Jos. " My beloved child !
For such, I trust, thou shalt be shortly.

Ida. Oh !
I am so already. Feel how my heart beats !

Jos. It does, my love ; and never may it throb
With aught more bitter.

Ida. Never shall it do so !
How should it ? What should make us grieve ? I hate
To hear of sorrow : how can we be sad,
Who love each other so entirely ? You,
The count, and Ulric, and your daughter Ida.

Jos. Poor child !

Ida. Do you pity me ?

Jos. No : I but envy,
And that in sorrow, not in the world's sense
Of the universal vice, if one vice be
More general than another.

Ida. I'll not hear
A word against a world which still contains
You and my Ulric. Did you ever see

Aught like him? How he tower'd amongst them all!
How all eyes follow'd him! The flowers fell faster —
Rain'd from each lattice at his feet, methought,
Than before all the rest; and where he trod
I dare be sworn that they grow still, nor e'er
Will wither.

Jos. You will spoil him, little flatterer,
If he should hear you.

Ida. But he never will.
I dare not say so much to him — I fear him.

Jos. Why so? he loves you well.

Ida. But I can never
Shape my thoughts of him into words to him:
Besides, he sometimes frightens me.

Jos. How so?

Ida. A cloud comes o'er his blue eyes suddenly,
Yet he says nothing.

Jos. It is nothing: all men,
Especially in these dark troublous times,
Have much to think of.

Ida. But I cannot think
Of aught save him.

Jos. Yet there are other men,
In the world's eye, as goodly. There's, for instance,
The young Count Waldorf, who scarce once withdrew
His eyes from yours to-day.

Ida. I did not see him,
But Ulric. Did you not see at the moment
When all knelt, and I wept? and yet methought,
Through my fast tears, though they were thick and
I saw him smiling on me. [warm,

Jos. I could not
See aught save heaven, to which my eyes were raised,
Together with the people's.

Ida. I thought too
Of heaven, although I look'd on Ulric.

Jos.

Come,

Let us retire! they will be here anon
Expectant of the banquet. We will lay
Aside these nodding plumes and dragging trains.

Ida. And, above all, these stiff and heavy jewels,
Which make my head and heart ache, as both throb
Beneath their glitter o'er my brow and zone.
Dear mother, I am with you.

*Enter COUNT SIEGENDORF, in full dress, from the
solemnity, and LUDWIG.*

Sieg. Is he not found?

Lud. Strict search is making everywhere; and if
The man be in Prague, be sure he will be found.

Sieg. Where's Ulric?

Lud. He rode round the other way
With some young nobles; but he left them soon;
And, if I err not, not a minute since
I heard his excellency, with his train,
Gallop o'er the west drawbridge.

Enter ULRIC, splendidly dressed.

Sieg. (to LUDWIG). See they cease not
Their quest of him I have described. [*Exit LUDWIG.*]

Oh, Ulric!

How have I long'd for thee!

Ulr. Your wish is granted —
Behold me

Sieg. I have seen the murderer.

Ulr. Whom? Where?

Sieg. The Hungarian, who slew Stralenheim.

Ulr. You dream.

Sieg. I live! and as I live, I saw him —
Heard him! he dared to utter even my name.

Ulr. What name?

Sieg.

Werner ! 't was mine.

Ulr.

It must be so

No more : forget it.

Sieg.

Never ! never ! all

My destinies were woven in that name :

It will not be engraved upon my tomb,

But it may lead me there.

Ulr.

To the point — the Hungarian ?

Sieg. Listen ! — The church was throng'd : the hymn
was raised ;“ *Te Deum* ” peal'd from nations, rather than

From choirs, in one great cry of “ God be praised ”

For one day's peace, after thrice ten dread years,

Each bloodier than the former : I arose,

With all the nobles, and as I look'd down

Along the lines of lifted faces, — from

K ' Our banner'd and escutcheon'd gallery, I

Saw, like a flash of lightning (for I saw

A moment and no more), what struck me sightless

To all else — the Hungarian's face ! I grew

Sick ; and when I recover'd from the mist

Which curl'd about my senses, and again

Look'd down, I saw him not. The thanksgiving

Was over, and we march'd back in procession.

Ulr. Continue.*Sieg.*

When we reach'd the Muldau's bridge,

The joyous crowd above, the numberless

Barks mann'd with revellers in their best garbs,

Which shot along the glancing tide below,

The decorated street, the long array,

The clashing music, and the thundering

Of far artillery, which seem'd to bid

A long and loud farewell to its great doings,

The standards o'er me, and the tramplings round,

The roar of rushing thousands, — all — all could not

Chase this man from my mind, although my senses
No longer held him palpable.

Ulr. You saw him

No more, then?

Sieg. " I look'd, as a dying soldier
Looks at a draught of water, for this man;
But stil' I saw him not; but in his stead —

Ulr. What in his stead?

Sieg. My eye for ever fell
Upon your dancing-crest; the loftiest,
As on the loftiest and the loveliest head,
It rose the highest of the stream of plumes,
Which overflow'd the glittering streets of Prague.

Ulr. What's this to the Hungarian?

Sieg. Much; for I
Had almost then forgot him in my son;
When just as the artillery ceased, and paused
The music, and the crowd embraced in lieu
Of shouting, I heard in a deep, low voice,
Distinct and keener far upon my ear
Than the late cannon's volume, this word — "*Werner!*"

Ulr. Uttered by —

Sieg. Him! I turn'd — and saw — and fell.

Ulr. And wherefore? Were you seen?

Sieg. The officious care
Of those around me dragg'd me from the spot,
Seeing my faintness, ignorant of the cause:
You, too, were too remote in the procession
(The old nobles being divided from their children)
To aid me.

Ulr. But I'll aid you now.

Sieg. In what?

Ulr. In searching for this man, or — When he's
found,

What shall we do with him?

Sieg.

I know not that.

Ul. Then wherefore seek?

Sieg. Because I cannot rest
Till ~~he~~ ^{he} is found. His fate, and Stralenheim's,
And ours, seem intertisted ! nor can be
Unravell'd, till —

Enter an ATTENDANT.

Atten. A stranger to wait on
Your excellency.

Sieg. Who?

Atten. He gave no name.

Sieg. Admit him, ne'ertheless.

[*The ATTENDANT introduces GABOR, and afterwards exit.*

Ah !

Gab. 'Tis, then, Wernem!

Sieg. (*haughtily*). The same you knew, sir, by that
name ; and you !

Gab. (*looking round*). I recognise you both : father
and son,

It seems. Count, I have heard that you, or yours,
Have lately been in search of me : I am here.

Sieg. I have sought you, and have found you : you
are charged

(Your own heart may inform you why) with such
A crime as — [*He pauses.*

Gab. Give it utterance, and then

I'll meet the consequences.

Sieg. You shall do so —

Unless —

Gab. First, who accuses me ?

Sieg. All things,

If not all men : the universal rumour —

My own presence on the spot — the place — the time —

And every speck of circumstance unite

To fix the blot on you.

Gab. And on me only?
 Pause ere you answer: is no other name,
 'Save mine, stain'd in this business?

Sieg. Trifling villain!
 Who play'st with thine own guilt! Of all that breathe
 Thou best dost know the innocence of him
 'Gainst whom thy breath would blow thy bloody
 slander.

But I will talk no further with a wretch,
 Further than justice asks. Answer at once,
 And without quibbling, to my charge.

Gab. 'Tis false!

Sieg. Who says so?

Gab. I.

Sieg. And how disprove it?

Gab., By

The presence of the murderer.

Sieg. Name him!

Gab. He

May have more names than one. Your lordship had so
 Once on a time.

Sieg. If you mean me, I dare
 Your utmost.

Gab. You may do so, and in safety;
 I know the assassin.

Sieg. Where is he?

Gab. (pointing to ULRIC). Beside you!

[ULRIC rushes forward to attack GABOR; SIEGLIN-
 DORF interposes.]

Sieg. Liar and fiend! but you shall not be slain;
 These walls are mine, and you are safe within them.

[He turns to ULRIC.]

Ulric, repel this calumny, as I
 Will do. I avow it is a growth so monstrous,
 I could not deem it earth-born: but be calm;

It will refute itself. But touch him not.

[ULRIC endeavours to compose himself.]

Gab. Look at him, count, and then hear me.

Sieg. (first to GABOR, and then looking at ULRIC).

I hear thee.

My God! you look —

Ulr. How?

Sieg. As on that dread night,

When we met in the garden.

Ulr. (composing himself). It is nothing.

Gab. Count, you are bound to hear me. I came hither

Not seeking you, but sought. When I knelt down
Amidst the people in the church, I dream'd not
To find the beggar'd Werner in the seat
Of senators and princes; but you have call'd me,
And we have met.

Sieg. Go on, sir.

Gab. Ere I do so,

Allow me to inquire, who profited
By Stralenheim's death? Was 't I — as poor as ever;
And poorer by suspicion on my name!
The baron lost in that last outrage neither
Jewels nor gold; his life alone was sought; —
A life which stood between the claims of others
To honours and estates scarce less than princely.

Sieg. These hints, as vague as vain, attach no less
To me than to my son.

Gab. I can't help that.

But let the consequence alight on him
Who feels himself the guilty one amongst us.
I speak to you, Count Siegendorf, because

I know you innocent, and deem you just, or them,
And ~~you~~ can proceed — 'ere v ~~even~~ in their faces!

The moment my eye met his, I exclaim'd,

"This is the man!" though he was then, as since,

at ULRIC, who has unbuckled his sabre, and is drawing lines with it on the floor — still in its sheath.

Ulr. (looks at his father and says) Let the man go on!

Gab. I am unarm'd, count — bid your son lay down His sabre.

Ulr. (offers it to him contemptuously). Take it.

Gab. No, sir, 't is enough That we are both unarm'd — I would not choose To wear a steel which may be stain'd with more Blood than came there in battle.

Ulr. (casts the sabre from him in contempt). It — on some

Such other weapon, in my hand — spared yours Once, when disarm'd and at my mercy.

Gab. True —

I have not forgotten it: you spared me for Your own especial purpose — to sustain An ignominy not my own.

Ulr. Proceed.

The tale is doubtless worthy the relater. But is it of my father to hear further?

[To SIEGENDORF.

Sieg. (takes his son by the hand). My son, I know my own innocence, and doubt not Of yours — but I have promised this man patience; Let him continue.

Gab. I will not detain you, By speaking of myself much: I began Life early — and am what the world has made me. At Frankfort on the Oder, where I pass'd Willing in obscurity, it was I could not deem it a place of resort

To hear related a strange circumstance
In February last. A martial force,
Sent by the state, had, after strong resistance,
Secured a band of desperate men, supposed
Marauders from the hostile camp. — They proved,
However, not to be so — but banditti,
Whom either accident or enterprise
Had carried from their usual haunt — the forests
Which skirt Bohemia — even into Lusatia.
Many amongst them were reported of
High rank — and martial law slept for a time.
At last they were escorted o'er the frontiers,
And placed beneath the civil jurisdiction
Of the free town of Frankfort. Of *their* fate
I know no more.

Sieg. And what is this, to Ulric?

Gab. Amongst them there was said to be one man
Of wonderful endowments: — birth and fortune,
Youth, strength, and beauty, almost superhuman,
And courage as unrivall'd, were proclaim'd
His by the public rumour; and his sway,
Not only over his associates, but
His judges, was attributed to witchcraft,
Such was his influence: — I have no great faith
In any magic save that of the mine —
I therefore deem'd him wealthy. — But my soul
Was roused with various feelings to seek out
This prodigy, if only to behold him.

Sieg. And did you so?

Gab. You'll hear. Chance favour'd me:
A popular affray in the public square
Drew crowds together — it was one of those
Occasions where men's souls look out of them,
And show them as they are — even in their faces!
The moment my eye met his, I exclaim'd,
“This is the man!” though he was then, as since,

With the nobles of the city. I felt sure
 I had not err'd, and watch'd him long and nearly;
 I noted down his form — his gesture — features,
 Stature, and bearing — and amidst them all,
 • Midst every natural and acquired distinction,
 I could discern, methought, the assassin's eye
 And gladiator's heart.

Ulr. (smiling). The tale sounds well.

Gab. And may sound better. — He appear'd to me
 One of those beings to whom Fortune bends,
 As she doth to the daring — and on whom
 The fates of others oft depend; besides,
 An indescribable sensation drew me
 Near to this man, as if my point of fortune
 Was to be fix'd by him. — There I was wrong.

Sieg. And may not be right now.

Gab. I follow'd him,
 Solicited his notice — and obtain'd it —
 Though not his friendship: — it was his intention
 To leave the city privately — we left it
 Together — and together we arrived
 In the poor town where Werner was conceal'd,
 And Stralenheim was succour'd — — Now we are on
 The verge — are you hear further?

Sieg.

I must do so —

Or I have heard too much.

Gab.

I saw in you
 A man above his station — and if not
 So high, as now I find you, in my then
 Conceptions, 't was that I had rarely seen
 Men such as you appear'd in height of mind,
 In the most high of worldly rank; you were
 Poor, even to all save rags: I would have shared
 My purse, though slender, with you — you refused it.

Sieg. Doth my refusal make a debt to you,
 That thus you urge it?

Sieg. (*advances to ULRIC*). Now, Count ULRIC !
 Forsook I dare not call thee — What say'st thou ?

Ulr. His tale is true.

Sieg. True, monster !

Ulr. Most true, father !

And you did well to listen to it : what
 We know, we can provide against. He must
 Be silenced.

Sieg. Ay, with half of my domains ;
 And with the other half, could he and thou
 Unsay this villany.

Ulr. It is no time
 For trifling or dissembling. I have said
 His story's true ; and he too must be silenced.

Sieg. How so ?

Ulr. As Stralenheim is. Are you so dull
 As never to have hit on this before ?
 When we met in the garden, what except
 Discovery in the act could make me know
 His death ? Or had the prince's household been
 Then summon'd, would the cry for the police
 Been left to such a stranger ? Or should I
 Have loiter'd on the way ? Or could you, Werner,
 The object of the baron's hate and fears,
 Have fled, unless by many an hour before
 Suspicion woke ? I sought and fathom'd you,
 Doubting if you were false or feeble : I
 Perceived you were the latter : and yet so
 Confiding have I found you, that I doubted
 At times your weakness.

Sieg. Parricide ! no less
 Than common stabber ! What deed of my life,
 Or thought of mine, could make you deem me fit
 For your accomplice ?

Ulr. Father, do not raise
 The devil you cannot lay between us. This

Is time for union and for action, not
For family disputes. While *you* were tortured,
Could *I* be calm? Think you that I have heard
This fellow's tale without some feeling? — You
Have taught me feeling for *you* and myself;
For whom or what else did you ever teach it?

Sieg. Oh! my dead father's curse! 't is working
now.

Utr. Let it work on! the grave will keep it down!
Ashes are feeble foes: it is more easy
To baffle such, than countermine a mole,
Which winds its blind but living path beneath you.
Yet hear me still! — If *you* condemn me, yet
Remember *who* hath taught me once too often
To listen to him! *Who* proclaim'd to me
That *these were crimes* made venial by the occasion?
That passion was our nature? that the goods
Of Heaven waited on the goods of fortune?
Who show'd me his humanity secured
By his *nerves* only? *Who* deprived me of
All power to vindicate myself and race
In open day? By his disgrace which stamp'd
(It might be) bastardy on me, and on
Himself — a *Nolon's* brand! The man who is
At once both warm and weak invites to deeds
He longs to do, but dare not. Is it strange
That I should *act* what you could *think*? We have
done
With right and wrong; and now must only ponder
Upon effects, not causes. Stralenheim,
Whose life I saved from impulse, as *unknown*,
I would have saved a peasant's or a dog's, I slew
Known as our foe — but not from vengeance. • He
Was a rock in our way, which I cut through,
As doth the bolt, because it stood between us
And our true destination — but not idly.

As stranger I preserved him, and he owed me
 His life : when due, I but resumed the debt.
 He, you, and I stood o'er a gulf wherein
 I have plunged our enemy. You kindled first
 The torch — you show'd the path ; now trace me that
 Of safety — or let me !

Sieg.

I have done with life !

Ulr. Let us have done with that which cankers
 life —

Familiar feuds and vain recriminations
 Of things which cannot be undone. We have
 No more to learn or hide : I know no fear,
 And have within these very walls men who
 (Although you know them not) dare venture all
 things.

You stand high with the state ; what passes here
 Will not excite her too great curiosity :
 Keep your own secret, keep a steady eye,
 Stir not, and speak not ; — leave the rest to me :
 We must have no third babblers thrust between us.

[*Exit ULRIC.*

Sieg. (solus). Am I awake ? are these my father's
 halls ?

And you — my son ? My son ! mine ! who have ever
 Abhor'd both mystery and blood, and yet
 Am plunged into the deepest hell of both !
 I must be speedy, or more will be shed —
 The Hungarian's ! — Ulr — he hath partisans,
 It seems : I might have guess'd as much. Oh fool !
 Wolves prowl in company. He hath the key
 (As I too) of the opposite door which leads
 Into the turret. Now then ! or once more
 To be the father of fresh crimes, no less
 Than of the criminal ! Ho ! Gabor ! Gabor !

[*Exit into the turret, closing the door after him.*

SCENE II.

,The Interior of the Turret.

GABOR and SIEGENDORF.

Gab. Who calls?

Sieg. I — Siegendorf! Take these and fly!
Lose not a moment!

[Tears off a diamond star and other jewels, and thrusts them into GABOR's hand.]

Gab. What am I to do
With these?

Sieg. Whate'er you will: sell them, or hoard,
And prosper; but delay not, or you are lost!

Gab. You pledged your honour for my safety!

Sieg. And
Must thus redeem it. Fly! I am not master,
It seems, of my own castle — of my own
Retainers — nay, even of these very walls,
Or I would bid them fall and crush me! Fly!
Or you will be slain by —

Gab. Is 't even so?
Farewell, then! Recollect, however, Count,
You sought this fatal interview!

Sieg. I did:
Let it not be more fatal still! — Begone!

Gab. By the same path I enter'd?

Sieg. Yes; that's safe still.
But loiter not in Prague; — you do not know
With whom you have to deal.

Gab. I know too well —
And knew it ere yourself, unhappy sife!
Farewell!

[Exit GABOR.]

Sieg. (solus and listening). He hath clear'd the
staircase. Ah! I hear

The door sound loud behind him ! He is safe !

Safe ! — Oh, my father's spirit ! — I am faint —

[*He leans down upon a stone seat, near the wall of the tower, in a drooping posture,*

Enter ULRIC, with others armed, and with weapons drawn.

Ulr. Despatch ! — he 's there !

Lud. The count, my lord !

Ulr. *recognising SIEGENDORF*. You here, sir !

Sieg. Yes : if you want another victim, strike !

Ulr. (*seeing him stript of his jewels*). Where is the ruffian, who hath plunder'd you ?

Vassals, despatch in search of him ! You see

'T was as I said — the wretch hath stript my father

Of jewels which might form a prince's heir-loom !

Away ! I 'll follow you forthwith.

[*Exeunt all but SIEGENDORF and ULRIC ?*

What 's this :

Where is the villain ?

Sieg.

There are *two*, sir : which

Are you in quest of ?

Ulr.

Let us hear no more

Of this : he must be found. You have not let him escape ?

Sieg. He 's gone.

Ulr.

With your connivance ?

Sieg.

With

My fullest, freest aid.

Ulr.

Then fare you well !

[*ULRIC is going.*

Sieg. Stop ! I command — entreat — implore ! Oh, Ulr !

Will you then leave me ?

Ulr.

What remain to be

Denounced — dragg'd, it may be, in chains ; and all

By your inherent weakness, half-humanity,
Selfish remorse, and temporising pity,
That sacrifices your whole race to save
A wretch to profit by our ruin! No, count,
Henceforth you have no son!

Sieg. I never had one;
And would you ne'er had borne the useless name!
Where will you go? I would not send you forth
Without protection.

Ulr. Leave that unto me.
I am not alone; nor merely the vain heir
Of your domains; a thousand, ay, ten thousand
Swords, hearts, and hands are mine.

Sieg. The foresters!
With whom the Hungarian found you first at Frank-
fort!

Ulr. Yes — men — who are worthy of the name!
Go tell
Your senators that they look well to Prague;
Their feast of peace was early for the times;
There are more spirits abroad than have been laid
With Wallenstein!

Enter JOSEPHINE and IDA.

Jos. What is 't we hear? My Siegendorf!
Thank Heav'n, I see you safe!

Sieg. Safe!

Ida. Yes, dear father!

Sieg. No, no; I have no children: never more
Call me by that worst name of parent.

Jos. What
Means my good lord!

Sieg. That you have given birth
To a demon!

Ida. (taking *ULRIC'S* hand). Who shall dare say
this of *Ulr.*?

